MOBILIZING EMPIRE:

RACE, SUGAR, AND U.S. COLONIALISM ACROSS THE PACIFIC, 1898-1934

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ABSTRACT

Mobilizing Empire: Race, Sugar, and U.S. Colonialism across the Pacific, 1898-1934

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This dissertation brings together histories of the colonization of the American West, Hawai‘i, and the Philippines to explore the historical development of race and capitalism in the formation of the U.S. empire. Focusing on the commercial production of sugar across the expanding U.S. empire, this dissertation traces in particular the formation of the migrant worker, whose recruitment and exclusion created the conditions of possibility for sugar production, imperial expansion, and, ultimately, anticolonial critique. Using the production of sugar as a lens onto broader historical processes, this dissertation shows how the U.S. empire operated through the movements of labor and capital, which produced contradictions that simultaneously reinforced and exceeded state objectives.

From 1906 to 1934, over 100,000 migrant Filipinos traveled to Hawai‘i, most of them recruited to work in the territory’s sugar plantations, while U.S. capital flowed in the opposite

direction to transform the Philippine economy in the name of "development" and racial "uplift." The annexation of Hawai'i and the Philippines in 1898 brought two additional sugar-producing regions under U.S. domain, threatening to undermine the nascent beet sugar industry in the western states. American sugar beet farmers mobilized to defend their industry against sugar produced by so-called "coolie" labor in the Philippines and Hawai'i, even as they depended on the racialized labor of noncitizen migrant workers in domestic sugar beet production. But the same forces that drove the transpacific migration of workers also generated political visions and social networks that exposed, critiqued, and challenged the U.S. empire. Drawing on plantation records, documents from the Bureau of Insular Affairs, and oral histories, this dissertation shows how Filipinos and other migrants leveraged imperial power relations to mobilize against capital and to pursue radical alternatives to American nationalism and U.S. colonial rule.

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Introduction

In the green leaves of a growing plant, photosynthesis takes place, a "miracle of sunshine, air, and water" that is the basis of a food chain that supplies energy for all life on earth. Roots take up water from the soil, acting as tiny capillaries that propel the water through the plant until it reaches the leaves. Carbon dioxide in the air moves through pores, called *stomata*, in the leaves where it meets the hydrogen and oxygen from the water, and energy from sunlight synthesizes these molecules into a new chemical compound—sugar—which provides the energy that sustains the plant as it grows and matures. All plants produce sugar in some form, but the substance that a majority of consumers would today most readily identify as sugar is sucrose, a sugar produced primarily from the sugarcane and sugar beets. Chemically, sugar derived from beets is identical to sugar made from sugarcane, a combination of twelve atoms of carbon, twenty-two atoms of hydrogen, and eleven atoms of oxygen ($C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$). But the uniformity of the commodity conceals the broad and varied range of social interactions, land policies, labor practices, and environmental conditions that attend its production.[1]

Historically, the social differences between cane sugar and beet sugar production have been vast, representing divergent labor systems associated with enslaved labor in the colonies and free labor in the metropole. The sugarcane, a grass grown in tropical and subtropical regions, has been historically cultivated on large plantations. Laborers divided into gangs have planted, hoed, and watered the rows of cane until the plants have matured into stout, fibrous stalks standing six to twenty feet tall. During the harvest season, the arduous tasks of stripping, cutting,

[1] This description comes from promotional material produced by the United States Beet Sugar Association, an organization formed to advance the interests of beet sugar producers in the United States. United States Beet Sugar Association, *The Beet Sugar Story* (Washington: U.S. Beet Sugar Association, 1959), 1.

and loading the cane onto trucks had to proceed quickly. As soon as the cane has been cut, its sugar content has begun to diminish, so any delay in transporting ripe sugar stalks from remote plantations to the mills that process them into marketable crystalline sugar would result in lower production. For centuries, large numbers of enslaved, contract, and migrant labor have been employed in all aspects of cane sugar production. Even with recent technological innovations that have mechanized some of the processes of cutting and loading, the cultivation and harvest of sugarcane continue to require large bodies of laborers working with speed and intensity under physically demanding conditions.[2] By contrast, the sugar beet has been concentrated in temperate regions. In Europe, where beet sugar first emerged as a viable industry in the early nineteenth century, sugar beets were initially produced on small farms, relying primarily on family and community labor to plant, thin, weed, and harvest the enormous root vegetable. The process of thinning was particularly onerous work. Until the development of new seed varieties after World War II, each sugar beet seed germinated multiple plants. Left undisturbed, the plants tend to twine around one another to restrict the growth of the root. To prevent that outcome, workers crawled on hands and knees through rows of seedlings, pulling all but the most promising plant from each of the seed germs. Though laborious, advocates for the beet sugar industry historically advertised this aspect of beet cultivation as a job well-suited to boys and girls as young as twelve, in keeping with the promotion of sugar beets as a family enterprise.[3]

In the United States, those seemingly disparate labor regimes overlapped and converged to reveal the intimate connections between racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and labor

[2] Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 58-60.
[3] U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Employment Security, *Technological Changes in Sugar Beet Cultivation: Effect on Seasonal Hired Labor*, report no. F-217 (Washington, April 1963): 6-7; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1898* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 26-27; hereafter cited as *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry*.

commodification. In 1898, the Spanish cane-producing colonies of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, as well as the embattled Republic of Hawai‘i, were all brought under U.S. authority, raising questions about U.S. colonial trade. In particular, the question as to whether falling under a U.S. flag brought those sugar-producing territories within U.S. tariff walls had potentially enormous consequences for U.S. beet sugar producers, who had depended on protectionist trade policies to foster their nascent industry. Fearing competition from plantation-grown sugar, U.S. beet sugar interests sought to establish a dichotomy between temperate, "civilized" nations that produced beet sugar and the tropical, implicitly "uncivilized" places where cane sugar was produced. In 1936, the U.S. Beet Sugar Association, a trade group representing the beet sugar industry, wrote: "Here in the temperate zone, where the greatest modern civilizations have developed and the greatest contributions to science and the arts have been made, sugar is indispensable to national welfare. Consequently the Nations north of the tropics—acting with foresight or repenting bitter experiences—have consistently fostered sugar production at home, from a source other than cane, in volume sufficient to supply a part, if not all, of their domestic requirements."[4] Recognizing that U.S. consumers could not discern between cane sugar and beet sugar, the association drew attention to the social conditions of production that the marketplace typically obscured. In doing so, they sought to resolve the contradictions of U.S. expansion by racializing—marking as "other" or "foreign"—the colonial territories that threatened metropolitan producers.

The introduction of commercial sugar production across the Pacific in the nineteenth century transformed landscapes, restructured economies, and disrupted social relations, creating conditions for new political alignments and power struggles. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz has

[4] U.S. Beet Sugar Association, *The Silver Wedge: The Sugar Beet in the United States* (Washington: U.S. Beet Sugar Association, 1936), 1.

detailed how the production of sugar was integral to the colonization of the New World, the expansion of slavery, and the emergence of a modern industrial society.[5] In particular, the production of sugar gave rise to a plantation regime defined by a large labor force, whose racial exploitation generated the creation of surplus value and the accumulation of capital. Shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific context, "Mobilizing Empire" surveys sugar production in a new era of empire-building and advanced capitalist development. After the abolition of slavery in the United States and across the Caribbean in the nineteenth century, planters and industrialists interested in the sugar-producing regions of the Pacific relied on a different labor formation—the migrant worker—whose marginalization facilitated not only the accumulation of capital, but also, the expansion of U.S. power over new lands and peoples. Ultimately, I argue, the transpacific migrations of labor and capital that enabled the United States to extract wealth from its colonies racialized and crystallized the category of migrant worker, whose labor became indispensable to the reproduction of colonial relations in modern U.S. history.

Invoking climate, advocates for the beet sugar industry advanced a notion that cane sugar and beet sugar represented two labor systems that were inherently incompatible with one another. Beet sugar, they suggested, was a product of scientific ingenuity produced by free, self-interested workers, while cane sugar, associated with the tropics, gave way to exploitative labor regimes. But there was nothing inevitable about the different labor formations that emerged from the production of these two crops. To the contrary, just a few years after the United States instituted a protective tariff to encourage the expansion of beet sugar, U.S. sugar beet production was no longer characterized primarily by family farms but instead developed some aspects that more closely resembled the structures and organization of sugarcane plantations, including a

[5] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

racially divided work force and a high concentration of capital. Although sugar beet farms were typically characterized by small, independent landholdings, within years of establishing beet sugar factories in California, the farmer-owners of beet farms depended on low-wage migrant workers, primarily from Japan and Mexico, for the majority of their manual labor demands. Each year, the populations of rural sugar beet towns swelled with the arrival of thousands of beet workers for the annual harvest. The migrant labor formations that emerged in metropolitan beet sugar, like the plantation labor formations that predominated in sugarcane production, were not inevitable. Rather, they reflected and shaped the dynamics of imperial expansion and capitalist development.

Sweetness and Empire

As Mintz demonstrates in his historical study of sugar, forced labor in the colonies was an essential component of capitalist development in the metropole: a growing working class of free industrial laborers created a market for goods produced by enslaved labor, which, in turn, satisfied the reproductive needs of free labor at a low cost. Those interrelated processes made possible capital accumulation on a global scale.[6] The decisive turning point came in the fifteenth century: the establishment of sugarcane plantations worked by enslaved labor in Portuguese and Spanish islands on the eastern Atlantic began to transform the nature of sugar consumption and the social relations embedded in its production. In a relatively short period of time, sugar went from a rare luxury commodity to a common necessity, a mainstay of the European diet. Sugar grown by enslaved labor sharply reduced the costs of reproducing the metropolitan proletariat by providing fuel and fiber to metropolitan workers who were thereby "freed" to work in the

[6] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

factories of industrializing Europe. But as industrial production continued to develop, the relationship between metropolitan economies and their overseas colonies changed. Among the causes of these shifts was the emergence of large-scale beet sugar production in Europe, a development that dramatically altered the role of sugar in the world economy.[7]

In 1850, sugarcane, grown mostly in European colonies, supplied over 85 percent of the world's sugar. But the disruption of trade caused by the Napoleonic wars earlier in the century had driven European governments to develop alternate supplies of sugar. As early as 1811 Napoleon I, facing a British blockade that cut off France from the sugar that typically flowed to the European continent from the West Indies, signed a decree ordering the planting of 79,000 acres of sugar beets and appropriated funds to build factories and experiment stations. Although the science of deriving sugar from beets—still in its infancy in the early nineteenth century—remained crude and inefficient compared to cane sugar production, nation-states across Europe recognized a strategic value in having a stable supply of homegrown sugar and began to foster the new industry with government subsidies in both research and production and with the introduction of protective tariffs. By the 1850s, government subsidies, combined with the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean, made beet sugar production increasingly competitive, with some continental beet sugar producers like France and Germany beginning to export their sugar. By the turn of the twentieth century, the expansion of beet sugar drove the share of cane sugar in the world market down to 34 percent.[8]

The effects of this dramatic shift from cane sugar to beet sugar were especially disruptive for sugar-producing colonies, particularly in the Caribbean. Losses in sugar revenue stoked

[7] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 29-30.
[8] U.S. Beet Sugar Association, *The Beet Sugar Story*, 10-12; B. C. Swerling, *International Control of Sugar, 1918-41* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), 11.

unrest among the laboring populations, mostly formerly enslaved Africans and indentured Asians, who outnumbered the white population on some islands by a ratio of twenty to one. Efforts to stabilize competition through a multi-lateral trade agreement in 1902 and the disruptions to European beet production during World War I quickly brought the share of cane production back up to three-quarters of the world's supply. A vast expansion of both cane and beet sugar production in the years following again reduced the share of cane sugar to 65 percent by the eve of World War II.[9] This study explores how U.S. power operated through those vicissitudes of sugar production, focusing in particular on how sugar production shaped and reinforced U.S. imperial relations across the Pacific.

Using the production of sugar as a lens onto broader historical processes, this dissertation demonstrates how the U.S. empire came to be defined by movements of labor and capital. It is premised on the idea that the United States has always been, and continues to be, an empire, incorporating lands and peoples unilaterally and unevenly, through violence and other means. Drawing on the work of labor historians, this study asserts that empire, like class, "happens," which is to say that empire always entails a historical relationship embodied by real people within real contexts.[10] I define empire as the historical processes and cultural practices through which these unequal relationships materialize at any given moment. As such, U.S. imperial processes were also processes of race-making, employing ideas about "civilization" to assert the cultural and biological inferiority of conquered peoples. Focusing on sugar, my work illustrates how empire "happened" through the deployment of various state technologies, specifically, sugar tariffs, land laws, and immigration policies that facilitated, encouraged, and controlled the

[9] Swerling, *International Control of Sugar*, 11-12; Bonham C. Richardson, "Depression Riots and the Calling of the 1897 West India Royal Commission," *New West Indian Guide* 66 no. 3/4 (July 1992): 170.
[10] This definition of empire draws specifically from the definition of class articulated in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 9.

movements of labor and capital. These technologies brought capital and the state together to define and maintain unequal relationships between the United States and the lands and peoples over which it asserted sovereignty, deploying race to justify the extension of U.S. hegemony even as expansion—and resistance to it—produced new racial meanings in and beyond the United States.

Land, Race, and Empire

The mutual formation of race and empire in U.S. history unfolded through struggles over land and labor. In the U.S. imperial context, race is inseparable from the question of land. Focusing on the production of sugar across different colonial contexts, this study shows how capital and the state organized empire through land policies that both mobilized and reinforced ideas about race. As Cedric Robinson has argued, capitalism leverages cultural norms to legitimize and naturalize uneven social formations; race is the outcome of these material processes.[11] U.S. colonial land policies, specifically those purportedly designed for economic development, leveraged cultural norms to justify Indigenous dispossession and the racial exploitation of labor, and thereby naturalized U.S. expansion. Drawing on longstanding republican cultural frameworks, U.S. land policy linked the existence of private property to civilization. Western colonizers categorized Indigenous peoples who lacked formal recognition of private property as less civilized to rationalize conquest and colonization. Legal historian Stuart Banner has observed that colonizers used the concept of *terra nullius*—land owned by no one—to assert that Indigenous peoples had no legal claim to the lands they occupied. Across North America and the Pacific, European and American colonizers imposed Western property

[11] Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

systems on Indigenous lands, putatively to "civilize" Native peoples, and, in the process, made Indigenous lands available for white settlers.[12]

Scholarship on the U.S. empire has tended to organize the history of American expansion into neat binaries and chronologies, including formal versus informal colonialism, continental versus by overseas expansion, and domestic versus foreign territories.[13] Those interpretations, however, ironically and implicitly have rendered the national incorporation of the continental United States as natural and inevitable, as if the U.S. empire materialized in the 1890s. By contrast, scholarship that focuses on the U.S. West have tended to frame continental expansion as a process that came to an end in the 1890s, reifying the "domestic" borders of the United States.[14] A focus on land, however, suggests a more complicated and contradictory history of empire. Fifty years before the U.S. annexation of Hawai'i, for example, a group of mostly American sugar planters engineered a massive land grab that cleared the way for the penetration of U.S. capital into Hawaiian sugar production and accelerated the decline of the Native Hawaiian population. Known as the Great Māhele, the appropriation of Indigenous lands set a precedent for the Dawes Act in 1887, opening lands in the western United States to colonial development long after the U.S. West was assumed to be an integral part of the United States. By subjecting historical processes of land appropriation and capital development to closer scrutiny,

[12] Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 128-129.
[13] Classic examples of this dichotomous framing of the U.S. empire include William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963). In a more recent example, Greg Grandin articulates a distinction between an earlier U.S. empire and a "new" empire beginning with the Reagan era distinguished by "soft power" in the earlier period and a more coercive "hard power" in the later period. See Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).
[14] Examples of this interpretation of U.S. history include Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Anne Farrar Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Richard White, *"It's your misfortune and none of my own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).

"Mobilizing Empire" situates U.S. expansion into the Pacific within ongoing processes of American colonial development in the western reaches of North America.

This dissertation illustrates how the commodification of land across colonial contexts facilitated dispossession as that process simultaneously produced race. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, capital and the state mobilized Western ideas about proper land use and civilization to produce the figure of the "savage" as child-like, colonial ward. Inferring an association between manhood and stewardship of the land, the racialization of the savage established the pretexts for colonization. Under the banner of "uplift," development and dispossession were parts of the same project of expansion, a racial project by which the United States forcibly dispossessed masses of people in Hawai'i, the Philippines, and North America in the name of "civilization." That was racial capitalism at work.

Dispossession as "development" found its clearest expression in President William F. McKinley's policy of "benevolent assimilation" in which the United States claimed control over the Philippines under the guise of extending freedom and justice to Filipinos through economic development, public health, and education. Development was therefore a means of extending U.S. sovereignty, as the U.S. policy of benevolent assimilation informed U.S. interventions across the globe in the twentieth century. But the relationship between development and U.S. colonialism was not new. The imperative to develop the resources of North America, finding religious expression in the "errand into the wilderness," was present at the founding of the United States, rooted in British colonial antecedents. It provided the rationale for claiming the lands of the many peoples of the continent and peopling it with European settlers and African slaves. And in the twentieth century, the rationale of benign development was used to justify U.S. intervention and expansion across the Pacific. As in nineteenth century, the United States was

made and reproduced in the twentieth century by racial practices of colonial dispossession. In the ongoing process of colonization, different material stakes shaped and reproduced U.S. colonial relations, often in terms and forms that simultaneously erased that broader history of colonialism.

Although the U.S. nation and the U.S. empire have developed together, in related and often indistinguishable guises, the process of defining the "domestic" and the "foreign" has historically constructed and justified U.S. imperial realities.[15] Historically, the precarious dichotomy of "foreign" versus "domestic" has supported the fiction of the U.S. "nation"; as U.S. expansion destabilized the "imagined community" of the United States, the projection of the continental United States as "domestic" simultaneously legitimized U.S. sovereignty over its North American borders—thereby naturalizing continental expansion—and racialized overseas territories as "foreign."[16] This fiction has facilitated the creation of a labor force racially subjected to American authority and available for capitalist exploitation, even as it rendered impossible that labor's inclusion within the nation. By focusing on the movements of labor and capital, this dissertation asserts that what is considered "national" or "domestic" is a product of the ordering process of empire.

This dissertation also traces the evolution of the concept of free labor and its role in U.S. expansion from the late-nineteenth century to the 1930s. As historian Eric Foner has argued, prior to the Civil War, wage labor was deemed a form of economic dependence incompatible

[15] Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3.

[16] In an anthropological study of the concept of "nation-ness," Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community." In contrast to communities on the scale of "primordial villages of face-to-face contact," wherein the members of the community experience their bonds through everyday contact, the community of the nation is *imagined*, meaning that although individual members of the nation will never know the majority of the other members, they yet share an understanding of communion and shared destiny with the other members of the nation. As an empire, the projection of the imagined community of the nation onto what has always been an empire has required significant intellectual labor to maintain a distinction between those within and those outside the nation. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7.

with American ideals of freedom. Based on the idea that wage earners could eventually rise to property-owning independence, the free labor ideal depended on the "opening" of land for settlement in the West to allow white laborers to escape the condition of "wage slavery" in the industrialized North. Free labor Republicans identified slavery and the possibility of its expansion into newly incorporated western territories as the primary threat to workers' independence, arguing that competition with enslaved labor would close off the "safety valve" of the U.S. West, wherein the availability of cheap lands afforded enterprising wage laborers an avenue for social mobility. But the ideal of escaping economic dependence through property-owning independence grew increasingly unattainable as industrialization made wage labor a permanent condition for more and more white Americans, a trend that advanced with the rise of industrial capitalism after the Civil War. A long-established reality for most Native Americans, African Americans, and non-white immigrants, economic dependence as a permanent condition challenged the racial foundations of a free labor society that presumed the inherent superiority of white labor. As theorized by economists and enshrined in U.S. law, free labor in the late nineteenth century was increasingly associated with freedom of contract, invoked not for the protection of workers, but instead, to strike down attempts to regulate wages and working conditions.[17]

As a new industry, beet sugar emerged in the midst of struggles over these larger economic shifts. Modeled after beet sugar production in Germany, where beets grown on small family farms met most of the country's demand for sugar, beet sugar promised the revitalization of western towns and rural areas by providing a market for a lucrative new crop that could be

[17] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xxxvi; Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 86-87.

grown by small-scale farmers of modest means. Specifically, its proponents argued, beet sugar supported the expansion of independent, freeholding, and, implicitly, white farmers. But just as protective tariff legislation was passed in 1897 to foster U.S. beet sugar production, the United States extended sovereignty over Hawai‘i and the Philippines, potentially undermining those protections by bringing white American farmers in direct competition with the sugar-producing regions of the Pacific. Although the industry only ever formed a small fraction of the U.S. economy, beet sugar came to have an outsized influence in U.S. imperial policy. Through the issue of the sugar tariff, western politicians invoked the plight of domestic beet sugar farmers to dramatize the imperative of protecting free "domestic" labor from competition with racially degraded "coolie" labor.

The debates over whether the newly acquired territories of the United States should be subject to U.S. tariffs exposed the contradictions intrinsic to capitalism and empire. The question of whether tariff protections would be extended to the new U.S. territories turned on definitions of what was deemed "foreign" versus "domestic" as the United States extended its claims to sovereignty across the Pacific. Arguing in favor of maintaining tariffs on the Philippines, proponents of American beet sugar somewhat anachronistically harnessed the original language of the free labor ideal to promote the sugar beet as a crop that could be managed by the humble family farmer who worked the land he owned, in sharp contrast to Asian laborers working on large plantations. Deeming the Philippines irrefutably "foreign," advocates for the beet sugar industry demanded tariffs for the protection of white workers and white farmers.

Where once slavery undermined free labor, the white American farmer—the symbol of free labor—was now presumably threatened by the plantation labor regimes of the Pacific. The supposed closing of the "frontier" theorized by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893 lent a sense of

urgency to protect free labor, as the incorporation of North American territories from coast to coast seemed to mark the natural limits of U.S. expansion.[18] In the same year Turner delivered his famous frontier thesis, the U.S. military tacitly supported the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, ostensibly to protect the property interests of U.S. citizens on the islands. And nearly two decades earlier, a policy of reciprocity had brought the kingdom within the U.S. economic sphere. At the same time, U.S. producers became more deeply entwined in national and international markets. Free labor depended increasingly on the "opening" of new markets for U.S. producers.

The supposed closing of the frontier marked neither the end of continental expansion nor the beginning of "overseas" expansion. U.S. expansion continued through an aggressive foreign policy aimed at opening markets overseas, an approach associated in particular with William Appleman Williams and the Wisconsin School of diplomatic history. According to these historians, a desire for foreign markets drove U.S. foreign policy and the creation of a U.S. overseas empire in the nineteenth century.[19] U.S. producers, particularly those in the newly developing economies of the U.S. West, depended on overseas markets to sustain and reproduce free labor, increasingly associated with an American standard of living defined by consumption. But positing an overseas empire defined by markets and distinct from continental expansion inadvertently obscured ongoing processes of imperial expansion and naturalized the colonization of the U.S. West. Bringing the U.S. West together with the Philippines and Hawai‘i, "Mobilizing Empire" disrupts the chronology and geography of the U.S. empire to highlight the overlapping

[18] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History (1893)," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and other essays*, ed. John Mack Faragher (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1994), 31-60.
[19] See especially Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, and LaFeber, *The New Empire*.

and mutually constitutive nature of continental and overseas expansion. In doing so, this dissertation situates the U.S. empire within a longer history of capitalist development.

U.S. land laws reproduced racialized labor regimes at the same time that they reconfigured whiteness in a U.S. colonial context. Homesteading schemes in the U.S. West and, to a lesser degree, in Hawai‘i, were conceived as a means of reproducing whiteness through property ownership and independent farming. In the Philippines, American homesteading laws were adapted, in theory at least, to promote "civilization" in the less developed regions of the Philippines. Land laws structured racial formation by leveraging the free labor ideal—which associated land ownership with civilization—against racially restrictive land ownership laws, in particular, homesteading laws and later alien land laws that conjoined whiteness, settlement, and citizenship. The supposed failure of migrants and Indigenous peoples to adapt to U.S. norms of land ownership and development, in turn, naturalized U.S. expansion as an inevitable outcome of capitalist development. Within this framework that posits land ownership as an indispensable component of civilization, I argue, U.S. capitalist development naturalized California as a "settled" part of the United States, framed Hawai‘i as integral to national defense, and projected the Philippines as a site of U.S. benevolent intervention. The structures of colonialism have been so effective because they have naturalized dispossession and exploitation, erasing all traces of the colonial violence that underwrote California's and Hawaii's incorporation as U.S. states and replacing them with a narrative of consent and democracy. Similarly, in the Philippines, race war and colonial conquest have been recast as a story of "benevolent assimilation" and "uplift."

Race, Empire, and Migrant Labor

In 1918, sixteen-year-old Leonard Aliwanag left his home in the Visayan island of Bohol in the Philippines for Hawai‘i. Because there were few opportunities for work or education in his province, when he heard there was an agent in Cebu recruiting young men to work in Hawaii's sugar plantations, he applied and signed a three-year contract with the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA). He knew little about where he was going, only that those who had gone returned home rich and happy: "The paradise of dollars, that's what they said," he recalled years later. Aliwanag did not remain in Hawai‘i as a plantation worker or return to his home in the Visayas. After two years, he broke his contract and left for the U.S. mainland. As soon as his ship arrived in San Francisco, he was greeted by labor contractors, who met Filipino workers to transport them to agricultural towns like Stockton, where they were sought for the backbreaking labor in fields up and down the West Coast. Aliwanag spent the next several years going from place to place taking farm and domestic work in Stockton, Los Angeles, and Catalina Island. Occasionally, he worked in Hollywood as an extra, particularly whenever the script called for a "native." After moving to New York during the Great Depression, he returned to the West Coast, following the seasons from Stockton, to Seattle, to the canneries in Alaska.[20]

Aliwanag's transpacific journey, barely imaginable just a decade earlier, had become routine by the time he left Bohol in 1918. His story is part of a larger history of capital and the state converging to organize what Neferti Tadiar has referred to as the reproduction of imperial social relations, or the "extended reproduction of the social relations of capital constituted through subjective norms of gender, race, and sexuality."[21] During this period of time the Big

[20] Aliwanag transcript, Washington State Oral/Aural History Program, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle.
[21] Neferti Tadiar, "Decolonization, 'Race,' and Remaindered Life Under Empire," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 23, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2015): 141.

Five sugar agencies—five leading sugar corporations that controlled Hawaii's economy—consolidated their control over the Hawaiian sugar industry. In 1909, the Big Five controlled 76 percent of Hawaiian sugar production. By 1920, the five agencies increased that figure to 94 percent. This accumulation of power and wealth had been made possible by the mass recruitment of workers, particularly from Japan. As U.S. immigration laws restricted the migration of workers from Asia, the HSPA, which represented nearly all of Hawaii's sugar planters, began importing large numbers of Filipino workers, whose colonial status enabled them to move freely across U.S. territories.

From 1906 to 1934, over 100,000 migrant Filipinos traveled to Hawai'i, most of them recruited to work in the territory's lucrative sugar industry, while American capital flowed in the opposite direction to transform the Philippine economy in the name of "development" and racial "uplift." The incorporation of Hawai'i and the Philippines in 1898 brought two additional sugar-producing regions under American domain that threatened to undermine the nascent beet sugar industry in California and other western states. American sugar beet farmers mobilized to defend their industry against sugar produced by racially degraded "cooly" labor in the Philippines and Hawai'i, even as they depended on the labor of noncitizen migrant workers in domestic sugar beet production. But the same forces that drove the transpacific migration of workers also generated political visions and social networks that exposed, critiqued, and challenged the U.S. empire. Migrant laborers and the colonized peoples on whose land they worked leveraged the logics of colonialism to mobilize against capital and to pursue radical alternatives to American nationalism and U.S. imperialism.

This dissertation explores how a new racial formation—the migrant worker—enabled the capitalization of western agricultural lands and the reproduction of American ideas about

freedom. The Philippines was critical to the formation of the migrant worker and to the broader history of the U.S. empire in the twentieth century. The emergence of the migrant worker as a U.S. imperial racial formation was a process that unfolded not in geographic isolation but across the spaces of the expanding United States. Across the U.S. empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the abolition of compulsory labor destabilized an economy structured around the racial division of labor. In Hawai‘i specifically, the incorporation as a U.S. territory in 1900 nullified the coercive labor practices that characterized Hawaii's plantation labor regime, threatening the social and economic foundations of Hawaii's political economy. Seeking to reconcile the contradictions of a plantation labor regime—that is inherently dependent on socially marginalized labor—within the democratic political system of the United States, the HSPA leveraged racialized assumptions about Filipinos to justify their recruitment in the name of benevolent development.

The U.S. imperial project of benevolent intervention brought capital and the state together to legitimize U.S. expansion through economic development and social modernization. In the Philippines, modernization meant disciplining ordinary Filipinos to the norms of wage labor. Recently pacified in a war defined by racial antipathy, Filipinos moved easily into the racial framework of Hawaii's sugar plantations. At the same time, the HSPA deflected criticism of their importation of labor by framing the transpacific traffic of Filipino workers within the broader project of colonial development. Shaping and following the logics of racial capitalism, the HSPA's recruitment of Filipino workers remade those displaced and rendered "surplus labor" by colonial development into beneficiaries of U.S. imperial benevolence.

As agrarianism gave way to industrialization, American freedom was increasingly associated with the American standard of living, defined by the consumer culture that flourished

in the twentieth century. U.S. expansion facilitated the massive growth in consumption. An aspect of that growth was a massive change in the way Americans got their food. Agricultural production on the West Coast, dubbed "factories in the fields" by journalist Carey McWilliams, had a distinctly industrial character. Because of the seasonal nature of agricultural work, these large-scale farming operations came to depend on migrant labor. There was also a growth in processed foods, made possible by migrant labor. As a preservative, sugar encouraged the expansion of fruit production, which was likewise dependent on migrant labor. Migrant labor outsourced the reproductive costs of labor on a global scale. By reproductive labor, I mean that labor which exists outside of the marketplace and which does not produce exchange value, but is nonetheless necessary to sustain and reproduce laborers as social and biological beings.[22] Workers' labor produces the wealth of societies, but much of the labor that is necessary to make a person employable exists beyond the circulation of commodities. In the United States, migrant labor propelled the expansion of a middle class, both through the creation of a class of small farmers, and more importantly, by lowering the cost of goods to American consumers. Material resources and labor power that would otherwise be engaged to reproduce American workers were rendered "surplus." In the organization of the U.S. empire, migrant labor made possible the consolidation of capital, based in no small measure on the rising standard of living in the twentieth-century United States.

Migrant labor enabled middle-class white men to pursue the ideals of white manhood through new habits of consumption that U.S. imperial expansion opened up. But expansion was rife with contradictions, as the extension of U.S. sovereignty brought millions of racialized subjects within the "domestic" boundaries of the United States, where they competed with white

[22] My definition of reproductive labor draws from Tithi Bhattacharya, ed., *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 2-3.

workers. That contradiction lay at the heart of liberalism as a Western project. Imperial expansion and racial governance defined the political and cultural processes of differentiating between those within and those outside the political body. In an era of expansion, when new peoples and places were brought under the authority of the United States, the imperative of defining the body politic became increasingly pronounced, as imperial social relations seemingly demanded racialized organization.[23]

Among the efforts to define and, implicitly, restrict those within the nation were land laws grounded in race. The mutual constitution of the migrant and the immigrant turned on an individual's potential relationship to the land. The potential for land ownership conferred the possibility of economic independence, however distant that possibility might have been in reality. At a time when large-scale immigration and rapid territorial expansion threatened very notion of whiteness, migrant labor emerged as the racial Other. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, racialized migrant labor proved essential to developing the economic infrastructures of the West: Asian labor in particular built the region's major industries, including the railroads, mining, fishing, and agriculture. Racially restrictive immigration laws prevented them from naturalizing as citizens, but Asian workers who established families, and particularly children born on U.S. soil, threatened to disrupt those racist laws. Gendered labor arrangements, where labor recruits were almost exclusively male, prevented a large U.S.-born Asian population, but the visible presence of Asians concentrated in West Coast cities generated a racial politics of exclusion that marked the "domestic" borders of the United States. Ultimately, I argue, empire

[23] Studies exploring the intersections of racial governance and U.S. state building include Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898–1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); and Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

framed and resolved those labor issues, on the U.S. mainland, in Hawai‘i, and in the Philippines. U.S. imperial processes that differentiated subjects across the U.S. empire simultaneously drew attention to and rendered invisible a labor regime of sugar production—rooted in the racialized migrant worker—spanning the Pacific.[24]

Chapter Outline

The first part of the study maps the production of racial subjects through the commodification of land and labor from California to the Philippines. It demonstrates how the reorganization of landscapes for the production of sugar introduced new ways of structuring power relations through the ownership of land and the private exploitation of natural resources. Chapter one maps the transpacific imperial field through the debates over the sugar tariff from 1897 to 1913 onto America's shifting imperial policies. Domestic sugar producers, particularly those involved in the nascent beet sugar industry, pursued tariffs to protect themselves from the competition of so-called "coolie" labor in Hawai‘i and the Philippines, even as agricultural development in the continental West increasingly relied on racialized migrant labor.

Chapter two and Chapter three detail how public land laws cleared the path for U.S. expansion by redefining the relationship of Indigenous peoples to the land. Homesteading legislation, ostensibly designed to remake Native Hawaiians and Philippine peasants into modern political subjects through individual land ownership, rendered "precolonial" (and "precapitalist") forms of land use and social reproduction illegible and illegitimate. The widespread dispossession of land that resulted from this legislation mirrored earlier and ongoing processes of

[24] See also Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York University Press, 2011).

colonial dispossession in the U.S. West. Chapter two explores the tensions between the homesteading initiatives of the state and the interests of capital in Hawai‘i. Though business organizations like the HSPA often opposed the territorial government, the two sides came together over questions of development, which required both the expulsion of the original inhabitants off the land and the importation of cheap labor. Chapter three turns to homesteading and agricultural colonization in the Philippines, where the implementation of a land registration system led not to a democratic redistribution of land but to vast accumulations of public lands by a concentrated elite.

The remaining chapters turn to the contradictions produced by the American agricultural industry's growing reliance on migrant labor, particularly following World War I. Chapter four situates the HSPA's early recruitment of Filipino labor in the context of a transpacific anti-Japanese movement. By the turn of the century, Japanese workers had become integral to sugar production in both Hawai‘i and California, subject to highly exploitative conditions. When Japanese workers resisted those conditions, sugar planters, white workers, and the U.S. state responded in three interconnected ways: by racializing Japanese workers and Japanese farmers as national security threats, containing Japanese mobility through local and national legislation, and promoting Filipino migrations. Chapter five turns to the recruitment of Filipinos to work in Hawaii's sugar plantations at the same time that U.S. capital, including American investors from Hawai‘i, flowed into Philippine agricultural development. These transpacific migrations of capital and low-wage migrant workers simultaneously enabled U.S. expansion and destabilized the racial borders of the nation. That contradiction, I argue, gave rise to a new U.S. imperial formation—a framework for labor immigration structured around benevolent imperialism.

In the end, this dissertation is a study of labor mobility and collective mobilization that shaped and contested the U.S. empire. Mobility reflected the desperate vulnerability of workers. Even as mobility was the condition of possibility for exploitation, it also produced a type of resistance. Mobility itself was the terrain of struggle. The very characteristics that made Filipino migrants a desired workforce—that they were overwhelmingly young, single, and male, with few ties to the local community—allowed them to challenge their subordination, often by simply leaving, for better prospects down the road or in another part of the U.S. empire. Workers, as historical subjects, were never mere units of production under the terms organized by the owners of capital and the officials of the expanding U.S. state. Ultimately, the commodification of labor generated a politics of refusal. Mobility thus functioned as a form of counter-conduct and mobilization, a means through which Filipino migrants confronted and critiqued the interests of empire and capital.

Chapter One

Racial Commerce: Beet Sugar, the Philippine Tariff, and U.S. Expansion

Introduction

In 1897, Congress passed the Dingley Tariff Act, raising duties on both raw and refined sugar. Within months, the Oxnard brothers' American Beet Sugar Company broke ground on a $2 million beet sugar factory in Ventura County, and the town of Oxnard rapidly materialized around it, drawing hundreds of farmers, factory workers, and laborers from the surrounding communities.[1] By the time the factory turned out its first sack of sugar in August 1899, the population had swollen to over 2,000, with more pouring in each day. Local newspapers reported that buildings could not be raised fast enough to accommodate the new arrivals, many of whom camped with their families in tents as they awaited more secure housing near the new factory.[2] Despite a severe drought that resulted in lower production than expected, the newcomers were encouraged by optimistic reports about "magnificent" returns on the 1898 sugar beet crop, the industry's projected growth under the Dingley tariff, and the recent expansion of California beet sugar factories.[3] In January 1898, before the Oxnard factory even began operating, work was underway to double the factory's daily capacity to 2,000 tons, to be completed in time for the 1899 season.[4] Not one to be outdone in the world of sugar, Claus Spreckels, widely known as

[1] Jeffrey Wayne Maulhardt, *Oxnard Sugar Beets: Ventura County's Lost Cash Crop* (Charleston: History Press, 2016), 66, 70-71.
[2] "Oxnard Sugar Factory in Full Operation," *San Francisco Call*, August 3, 1899.
[3] "The Coming Industry of Ventura County," *San Francisco Call*, October 8, 1898; "Enthusiastic Reception: Senator Perkins Addresses Sacramento Citizens," *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 29, 1898; "Beet Sugar: Greater Production in California This Season Than Ever Before," *Sacramento Daily Union*, November 12, 1898.
[4] "Will Double Its Present Capacity," *San Francisco Daily Call*, January 27, 1899; *LPSM* 22, no. 15 (April 15, 1899): 237.

Hawaii's "sugar king," began construction on a 3,000-ton-capacity factory, then the largest beet sugar factory in the world.[5]

Oxnard, California was one of many boomtowns that sprang up across the western United States as a result of the protective tariffs on sugar at the turn of the century. The Dingley Tariff Act breathed new life into the nascent U.S. beet sugar industry: within months of its passage, millions of dollars were invested in beet sugar factories across the United States, particularly in California and Michigan, around which farmers pledged thousands of acres to the production of sugar beets to supply the new enterprises. At the beginning of 1897, just eight beet sugar factories were in operation across the entire United States with a total capacity to process 330,750 tons of beets into sugar annually. By 1903 there were 55 factories with a total annual capacity of 3 million tons, each drawing would-be farmers, factory hands, and investors to rural communities, encouraged by the favorable trade environment and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's renewed commitment to fostering the growth of the industry.[6]

Beet sugar emerged as a racial and colonial project linked to the ongoing settlement and development of the U.S. West, one of many efforts by the federal government ostensibly designed to promote independent, small-scale, and—implicitly or explicitly—white farmers. Prior to the Dingley Act, the 1887 Dawes Act subdivided Native American tribal landholdings into individual allotments, imposing a western system of private property onto Native Americans in order to appropriate the remaining lands for white settlers, dispossessing Native American

[5] U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry in the United States in 1898* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898), 16 (report produced annually by the USDA; hereafter cited as *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry*).

[6] The USDA conducted extensive investigations into the viability of sugar beet cultivation throughout the United States by importing over 34,000 pounds of seed from European companies and distributing them to 7,000 farmers across the states along with instructions for planting, cultivating, and harvesting. Samples were returned to the USDA for analysis to determine the region and soil types best suited to growing beets. Additionally, the USDA published annual surveys on the market conditions and outlook for potential growth beginning in 1898. *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1899), 5-6, 131-134; *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1903), 86-90.

tribes of roughly 92 million acres over the 47 years of the act's operation.[7] Also among these efforts were the National Reclamation Act of 1902, meant to encourage settlement of the arid regions of the U.S. West through federally funded irrigation projects, and the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, which increased the acreage of individual homesteads for farmers willing to work suboptimal lands. As industrialization channeled ever greater numbers of American workers into a permanent condition of exploitive wage labor, sugar beet production presented a possibility of property-owning independence. The Dingley Tariff Act of 1897, designed in part to foster the nascent beet sugar industry, championed the cause of free labor and renewed the federal government's commitment to white farmers, at least rhetorically. But the very next year the United States seemed to abruptly turn away from this commitment as its claims extended into the Pacific and took control of Hawai'i, a major producer of sugarcane, and the Philippines, which had the potential to be one.

Sugar producers in the incorporated regions of the United States were therefore deeply interested in U.S. imperial expansion and the forms it would take, specifically, whether the new tariffs on sugar applied to the newly claimed U.S. territories of the Pacific and the Caribbean. But sugar producers formed a heterogeneous group with varied, in some cases contradictory, interests that changed over time, and they pursued these interests in debates over the sugar tariff. Sugar beet farmers relied on protective tariffs to remain competitive in the U.S. market; they surmised that bringing the new territories within U.S. tariff walls would render these protections ineffectual, leaving the industry stillborn before it ever truly got off the ground. For sugar refiners, however, eliminating tariffs on sugar from the newly acquired territories in the Pacific

[7] Through the appropriation of "surplus" land after the federal government made individual allotments, Native American landholdings fell from 147 million acres in 1887 to 55 million acres in 1934, when the Indian Reorganization Act ended allotments. Michael R. McLaughlin, "The Dawes Act or General Indian Allotment Act of 1887: The Continuing Burden of Allotment," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 20, no. 2 (1996): 65.

and, more importantly, from the Caribbean, meant an abundance of raw sugar at a low cost, enabling the refiners to extract more value. The New York-based Sugar Trust, reorganized as the American Sugar Refining Company (ASRC) in 1891, controlled most of the refineries east of the Rockies, and used their enormous influence to encourage low tariff rates on raw sugar while maintaining a high duty on refined sugar. Further complicating matters, as different territories were brought within tariff walls as a result of either expansion or reciprocal trade arrangements, U.S.-based companies, particularly those within the Sugar Trust, invested in overseas sugarcane, which would compete with domestically grown sugar beets.[8]

Situated among these were the beet sugar companies that owned the factories. Despite having a clear interest in beet sugar as an industry, they were quickly subordinated to U.S. refining interests. In 1902, the Sugar Trust made its first inroads into beet sugar when it purchased a half interest in the Utah Sugar Company. By 1907, the trust held a commanding interest in almost every large sugar beet company in the United States.[9] And caught in the midst of it all were workers variously racialized and understood as foreign or domestic, migrant or farmer. Their tenuous economic positions hinged on U.S. imperial policies that were inconsistent, shifting, and often contradictory.

Though U.S. expansion formally brought the Philippines within the U.S. empire, tariffs more concretely defined U.S. imperial relations, distinguishing what counted as "foreign" from what counted as "domestic" in terms of trade. Tariffs, therefore, became a highly contested site over which various state and private interests sought to reconcile these seemingly contradictory impulses: one side argued that bringing U.S. territories like the Philippines within tariff walls

[8] César J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 50-51; Alfred S. Eichner, *The Emergence of Oligopoly: Sugar Refining as a Case Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 70, 150-151.
[9] Eichner, *The Emergence of Oligopoly*, 235, 248.

could serve to advance colonial development objectives, while their opponents insisted that such a move would harm U.S. workers. Both sides elided and promoted the imperial project, obscuring the global and racialized regime on which western development depended.[10] From 1902 to 1913, the United States debated and revised its tariff policy in relation to the Philippines, reducing and then eliminating tariffs on Philippine sugar and other goods. But the incorporation of the Philippines into the U.S. economy was conditional upon Filipinos' status as "wards" of the United States. As such, they were deemed unfit to be citizens. As tariff walls raised against the Philippines crumbled and eventually fell, the boundary defined and reified by the tariff became increasingly racial, expanding the U.S. empire while defining the "domestic" nation as white.

Tariffs, Reciprocity, and Colonial Trade

Mainland farmers arguing against lowering trade barriers to the Philippines cited Hawai'i as a cautionary tale. In debates considering whether the Philippines, as a U.S. colony, should be exempt from tariff duties, American farming interests referred repeatedly to Hawai'i and its dependence on Asian contract labor, particularly from China. A treaty of reciprocity between Hawai'i and the United States had allowed Hawaiian sugar to enter the U.S. market duty-free since 1876, inextricably entwining Hawai'i with the U.S. market and institutions. Since the 1850s, many in support of, and opposed to, free trade between the United States and Hawai'i

[10] Several authors have elaborated on the development of the West and the formation of U.S. empire as an intrinsically racial project including: Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

viewed reciprocity as the first step in the eventual annexation of Hawai‘i.[11] The realization of this prediction in 1898 fueled apprehension over U.S. economic policy toward the Philippines.

By the early nineteenth century, mounting pressure from American and European commercial interests had led to a gradual shift in Hawaii's government in support of expanding foreign trade. Before sugarcane was ever planted on a commercial scale in the islands, Hawai‘i had emerged as the center of a transpacific trade in furs, sandalwood, and whale oil in which western imperial powers competed for access to Asian markets. Its central location made it a critical way station for ships crossing the Pacific, and an early commerce in supplying transpacific voyagers rapidly brought Hawai‘i into a global trade network. In 1835, the American commercial firm Ladd and Company established the first commercial sugarcane plantation in Hawai‘i with the support of American missionaries. As haole (foreign, specifically white)[12] interests in Hawai‘i grew, foreign commercial houses demanded that the Hawaiian government expand and protect the property rights of haole businessmen in the islands, often with the implicit or explicit support of colonial powers in the form of treaties, the establishment of state commissions based in Honolulu, and most menacingly, warships sent to protect their subjects' interests.[13] Imperial states reluctant to engage in outright competition for Pacific territories asserted their dominance in the region by framing bellicose actions as self-defense, establishing a precedent for increasing foreign intervention into Hawaiian affairs.

[11] Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 79.
[12] I use the Hawaiian word "haole" in Hawaiian contexts to denote non-Indigenous or foreign persons of European or American descent in Hawai‘i. According to Noenoe Silva, the term initially referred broadly to any foreigner, but from the nineteenth century on became associated specifically with white foreigners. Thus the term distinguishes between white settlers in Hawai‘i and other non-Indigenous peoples who migrated to Hawai‘i as a result of the history of colonization. Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 236-237.
[13] Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom,* 3 vols. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), 1: 98, 153.

In the 1830s foreign commercial and missionary interests used their growing influence in the Hawaiian kingdom to profit from the development of Hawaii's rich agricultural resources. For the missionaries, who began arriving in Hawai'i in 1820, the industrial and agricultural development of the islands was an integral part of the civilizing mission inherent in spreading the gospel. Though the missionaries expressed ambivalence about foreigners dominating the islands' commercial development, they rationalized the influx of foreign capital and expertise as a means of accomplishing their objective of bringing western civilization to the island kingdom. Sugar production in Hawai'i appeared to be a particularly promising venture; rapid population growth in the westernmost regions of North America following the cession of northern Mexico to the United States and the discovery of gold in California in 1848 expanded a potential market not readily accessible to east coast sugar refiners. But high U.S. tariffs and the competition of cheaply produced sugar from the Philippines, China, and the Dutch East Indies kept Hawaiian producers from a establishing a strong foothold in the U.S. market, checking the industry's development in its early years.[14] Undeterred, haole sugar producers, many of whom had gained influence with the Hawaiian monarchy, began pursuing a treaty of reciprocity between Hawai'i and the United States.

Maintaining privileged access to markets was critical for sugar producers seeking to remain competitive in the global sugar market of the nineteenth century and was the primary limit to the expansion of Hawaii's early sugar industry. Once refined, sugar is a relatively uniform commodity, and by the mid-nineteenth century, most of the consumer markets of Europe were able to supply the majority of their own sugar needs, either through cane sugar

[14] Jacob Adler, *Claus Spreckels: The Sugar King in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1966), 8-10; Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 319.

produced in the colonies or heavily subsidized beet sugar.[15] In the United States, tariffs on refined sugar imports had been in place since 1789, serving mainly to generate revenue for the U.S. treasury, but also encouraging the expansion of Louisiana sugar production after the United States acquired the territory in 1803 and promoting the development of a domestic refining industry. Under the reign of Kamehameha III from 1825 to 1854, the ruling monarch's haole advisors promoted annexation to the United States or, alternatively, a treaty of reciprocity, as two possibilities that would secure the U.S. market for Hawaiian sugar and stimulate foreign investment.[16]

Though suspicious of the growing influence of westerners in Hawaii's government, the Hawaiian monarchy viewed the expansion of sugar production in the islands in existential terms. Since the first arrival of Europeans in the late eighteenth century, Hawai'i had suffered devastating population losses and a faltering economy. Under the influence of haole advisers, Kamehameha III saw expanding the agricultural productivity of the islands as key to the survival of the Hawaiian Kingdom and to the survival of the Kanaka Maoli, the Native Hawaiian people.[17] But as sugar production reshaped Hawaii's social structures, economy, and physical landscape, it drew the island kingdom more deeply within global economic entanglements and European and American imperial ambitions. In particular, haole missionaries and their children

[15] European government first began subsidizing beet sugar in 1811, when Napoleon I of France appropriated government funds to promote sugar beet production and the development of factories for manufacturing refined sugar. By the mid-nineteenth century, this had evolved into a complex system of bounties and taxes, wherein domestic consumers paid an excise tax on domestic sugar, which was then returned to domestic sugar producers as a bounty on sugar exported. The system, designed to stimulate local production and shield it from competition, made Austro-Hungarian and German sugar the cheapest on the world market by the 1870s, and led to a "bounty war" between France and Germany that led to an overproduction of sugar and an abrupt collapse of the price of sugar in 1884 that precipitated a crisis in global sugar production. Michael Fakhri, "The Institutionalisation of Free Trade and Empire: A Study of the 1902 Brussels Convention," *London Review of International Law* 2, no. 1 (2014): 57.
[16] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 332.
[17] "Kanaka" in the Hawaiian language means "person," and "maoli" means "original, true, indigenous." Throughout this dissertation, I use Kanaka Maoli (plural Kānaka Maoli) to refer to persons indigenous to the Hawaiian islands. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 12; Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007),128-129.

inserted themselves into the Hawaiian government as early as the 1830s and then sought to leverage their connections to the United States to establish a trade relationship with the United States and, increasingly, to seek protections on their investments. As a result, sugar production and the quest for reciprocity became deeply imbricated with U.S. expansion into Hawai‘i.[18]

The monarchy and most Kānaka Maoli fervently opposed annexation, and pursued reciprocity as a means of survival in the face of economic and demographic collapse. Anxious to expand their operations, Hawaii's sugar planters were divided on whether annexation or reciprocity was the better option—annexation would be a more permanent solution to the problem of markets, but also subordinated the nation to the United States—but they agreed that a closer relationship with the United States was the solution to their economic woes. Many people on both sides of the issue in both Hawai‘i and the United States saw reciprocity as inevitably leading to annexation, though contrary to this idea, some pro-annexationist haoles in Hawai‘i opposed the treaty because they believed it would forestall annexation.[19]

In the incorporated regions of the United States, sentiments toward reciprocity with Hawai‘i were also divided. For some the annexation of Hawai‘i was the extension of a Manifest Destiny that had brought the United States to the West Coast. In particular, expansionists in Congress were increasingly interested in the strategic location of Hawai‘i and saw reciprocity as a way to develop both economic interests and strategic influence in the Pacific.[20] Some West Coast commercial interests saw an opportunity to profit as brokers for Hawaiian trade. But others, particularly those involved in the sugar production in the United States, objected to giving

[18] The history of missionaries in trade and their role in bringing Hawai‘i within the U.S. orbit is summarized in several studies, including Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai‘i*, revised ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), intro.; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 33-43.
[19] Merze Tate, *Hawaii: Reciprocity or Annexation* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968), 61; Jon M. Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawaii?* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 118-119.
[20] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 2: 248-249.

Hawaiian sugar unfettered access to the U.S. market. Southern sugarcane planters opposed the treaty because they did not want competition from foreign sugar. West Coast sugar refiners also opposed the treaty because some Hawaiian mills turned out sugar of a high enough grade to go to market without further refining, unlike the raw sugar produced by other sugarcane producers. Leading the charge against reciprocity in 1875 was Claus Spreckels. Spreckels, a German immigrant, had gotten his start in the grocery business before turning to sugar refining in San Francisco. He organized the Bay Sugar Refinery in 1863 and quickly rose to become the dominant sugar refiner on the West Coast, profiting from the region's rapid development and driving most of the competing West Coast refiners out of business.[21]

After a long deliberation, a treaty of reciprocity was concluded between the United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom that went into effect in 1876, granting Hawaiian sugar tariff-free access to the U.S. market and, in exchange, ceded control of Pu'u Loa, land now known as Pearl Harbor, for a naval base.[22] When it became clear that a treaty of reciprocity would pass, Spreckels abruptly changed course and boarded the first available ship for Hawai'i—the same ship carrying news of the treaty's passage—where he became the first to profit from the new trade arrangement by purchasing over half of the anticipated 14,000-ton sugar crop for 1877 before the treaty drove up the price of sugar. Over the following two decades, Spreckels invested millions of dollars to become the dominant figure in Hawaiian sugar production and wielded considerable influence in the affairs of the Hawaiian kingdom.[23] Investments by Spreckels and other Americans inaugurated a massive expansion in Hawaiian sugar production that set into motion the transpacific migrations of both capital and workers. Foreign capital, primarily from

[21] Adler, *Claus Spreckels*, 14; Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai'i?*, 118-119.
[22] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 3: 35.
[23] Jessica B. Teisch, *Engineering Nature: Water, Development, and the Global Spread of American Environmental Expertise* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 134-135; Adler, *Claus Spreckels*, 3, 22-23.

the United States, poured into Hawai‘i turning nearly all arable land in the kingdom to the production of sugarcane. Under the terms of the treaty, reciprocity could be revoked by either party, leading many of the haole sugar planters to seek a more permanent relationship with its primary market. But they had to compete with the emergent beet sugar interests in the United States.[24]

California was the early leader in the U.S. beet sugar industry, having established large-scale grain and fruit production beginning in the mid-nineteenth century that oversaturated the market and pushed farmers to seek alternative enterprises. At the forefront of this new industry were the Oxnard brothers of New York and Claus Spreckels. Experimenting with techniques for deriving sugar from beets learned in his native Germany, Spreckels built the first successful U.S. beet sugar factory in Watsonville, California in 1888. Though sugar had been manufactured from beets in the United States as early as 1830, it struggled to compete against the well established production of cane sugar in the tropics. The success of beet sugar in the temperate climates of Europe in the late nineteenth century and the perceived advantages of being self-sufficient in a staple food renewed interest in the crop.[25]

Testifying on behalf of the beet sugar industry in 1889 was a young Henry T. Oxnard. A third-generation sugar producer, Oxnard considered himself and his brothers to be “practical sugar men,” having been brought up in a sugar-producing family. The history of the Oxnard family illustrated the entanglements of the different types of sugar production and labor regimes in U.S. history. His father had owned three sugar plantations and a refinery in Louisiana until just before the Civil War, when he sold his interests and left the South, eventually settling in Boston

[24] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, *Tariff Hearings before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 54th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), 661 (hereafter cited as *Dingley Tariff Hearings*); Adler, 9.
[25] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1902), 77.

where he built and operated another sugar refinery. Despite the language of free labor, the leading figure of beet sugar was built on the accumulation of capital from enslaved labor.[26] Oxnard's own career began in 1876, when he and his brothers purchased the Fulton Sugar Refining Company in Brooklyn, New York, to refine raw beet sugar imported from Europe. Unable to compete against the larger refiners controlled by H. O. Havemeyer and the American Sugar Refining Company, the Oxnard brothers sold their Brooklyn refinery around 1887, and Henry spent the next two years traveling to beet sugar factories across Europe to learn about the industry and determine whether it might be viable in the United States.[27]

While in Europe, Oxnard was impressed by how the state could practically call an industry into being through protective legislation. Through high tariffs, he observed, European governments fostered and developed beet sugar production, "the source of great—I may say the greatest—national wealth to Germany, France and Austria, and which is the great commercial, agricultural and manufacturing industry on the continent of Europe to-day."[28] Convinced of the potential for beet sugar in the United States, Oxnard returned to the United States in 1889 and began arguing the case for beet sugar before Congress and the American public. With support from the government, beet sugar could transform local communities and the national economy, he argued. Given the proper protections, he added, within ten years beet sugar companies would employ 140,000 men in factories and another two million in the fields in addition to stimulating ancillary industries like iron, coal, and cattle. In an appearance before the House Ways and

[26] Alfred Dezendorf, "Henry T. Oxnard at Home," *San Francisco Call*, July 10, 1904; *Hearings held before the Special Committee on the Investigation of the American Sugar Refining Co. and others* v. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 370 (hereafter cited as *Hardwick Hearings*).
[27] At this time, most of the sugar mills used by beet sugar farmers and cane cultivators lacked the capacity to produce refined sugar. Instead, they produced raw sugar, which was then sold to the refineries that further processed the crystals. *Hardwick Hearings*, 370, 373.
[28] "Speech of Henry T. Oxnard, of Nebraska, before the Congressional Committee of Ways and Means at Washington," *Hawaiian Planters' Monthly* 9, no. 4 (April 1890): 184.

Means Committee in December 1889, Oxnard asked Congress to extend tariff protections on beet sugar to "allow a new industry of great promise to demonstrate its ability to supply in a few years the home market with all its sugar at a cheaper price than it has ever before enjoyed."[29]

The resulting McKinley Act of 1890 abolished tariff duties on all raw sugar imports and retained a duty on refined sugars, thereby extending Republican protectionism to the growing refining interests like the Sugar Trust. Additionally, it provided a bounty of two cents per pound on refined sugar produced in the United States in an effort to stimulate beet sugar production.[30] Encouraged by the assurances of the new act, the Oxnard Beet Sugar Company established two new factories in 1891, including a second factory in Nebraska and one in Chino, California.[31] With the Chino factory, the Oxnards joined Claus Spreckels in sugar production on the West Coast. Yet another factory, erected by Mormons in Lehi, Utah following the passage of the 1890 tariff, seemed to indicate that before too long the United States would be capable of fully supplying home markets as Oxnard had suggested. Reflecting on this rapid development, Spreckels predicted in 1892 that if the McKinley tariff were to continue, within five years the United States would be exporting sugar instead of importing it.[32]

In spite of the early enthusiasm for beet sugar, the expansion of the industry stalled after 1891, a slump that Oxnard and others later attributed to the passage of the 1894 Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act.[33] Tariffs were a thoroughly partisan issue, and in the early 1890s, the developing beet sugar industry was supported by Republican protectionism. But the 1890 tariff had raised prices on many commodities that, coupled with a prolonged depression beginning in 1893, set the stage

[29] "Speech of Henry T. Oxnard," *Hawaiian Planters' Monthly* (April 1890): 183.
[30] F. W. Taussig, "The McKinley Tariff Act," *The Economic Journal* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 1891): 344.
[31] *Hardwick Hearings,* 376-377; *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1902), 85-86.
[32] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1902), 85; "His Hobby is Beets," *San Francisco Call,* September 18, 1892.
[33] *Hardwick Hearings,* 387; *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* 18, no. 1 (January 1897): 13, 15. (hereafter *LPSM*).

for new legislation detrimental to the development of beet sugar. Significant Republican losses in the 1890 Congressional elections gave the Democrats a commanding majority in the House, and a Democratic victory in the 1892 presidential election further signaled the shift away from protectionist policies. From 1892 to 1896, only two additional beet sugar factories were built in the United States, both of which failed and closed within two seasons.[34]

The Wilson-Gorman tariff, supported by the ascendant Democratic party, was supposed to lower consumer costs by reducing import duties. Several significant amendments made in the Senate undermined this populist objective when the representatives of various industries exerted pressure on lawmakers. Still, the 1894 act made it more difficult for beet sugar to gain a foothold.[35] The Sugar Trust, whose interests were in opposition to the nascent beet sugar industry, used its growing influence to manipulate tariff duties to its own advantage. As producers of refined sugar, the Sugar Trust purchased and refined raw sugar typically made from sugarcane in tropical regions, including Louisiana, which at the time was the only place where cane sugar was produced domestically. Its primary competition was from Europe, where refined sugar could be produced directly from the sugar beet, eliminating the role of refineries in importing nations like the United States. The Sugar Trust therefore used its influence to secure higher import duties on refined sugars and lower duties on the raw sugar they needed to manufacture their product. Exploiting the more narrow advantage the Democrats held in the Senate, the trust made financial contributions to both parties, and crafted concessions that benefited Louisiana sugar producers to gain support from that state's Democratic senators.

[34] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1902), 85-86.
[35] Roy G. Blakey, "Beet Sugar and the Tariff," *Journal of Political Economy* 21, no. 6 (June 1913): 543.

Meanwhile, the bounty that had benefited beet sugar producers was eliminated, leaving most of the benefits of the new tariff to accrue to the Sugar Trust.[36]

Another realignment in the nation's politics over the next few years, however, portended a shift in the fortunes of domestic beet sugar producers. In the midst of ongoing depression, the Democrats lost more than half of their seats in the congressional elections of 1894. In December 1896, Republican members of Congress, fresh from recent victories in both the legislative and presidential races, initiated hearings on a new tariff bill that would, once again, raise tariffs on imported sugar. Representatives of domestic cane and beet sugar producers were nearly unanimous in their support of instituting high tariff walls on sugar, framing it as an issue of national importance. Once again, Henry Oxnard testified on behalf of beet sugar interests, resurrecting many of his earlier arguments on behalf of protectionist legislation. The United States, he argued, had the necessary climate, soil conditions, and sufficient capital to fully supply the nation's demands for sugar in just fifteen years. Instead, it imported more than $100 million worth of sugar each year while millions of acres of fertile land lay idle, money, he noted, that could be paid out to America's own laborers, farmers, and mechanics for the development of the nation's vast natural resources.[37]

Standing in the way of such progress, according to Oxnard and others testifying on behalf of the sugar industry, was competition from cheaply produced sugar from Germany, Austria, France, and elsewhere. In addition to cheaper labor costs than those in the United States, Oxnard observed, nearly all European nations encouraged domestic sugar production by levying tariffs on imported sugars and paying high bounties to their farmers. The cost of labor, foreign competition, and adverse legislations, he said, left the "domestic capital already invested in a

[36] F.W. Taussig, "The Tariff Act of 1894," *Political Science Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (December 1894): 604.
[37] *LPSM* 18, no. 1 (January 1897): 13-15.

perilous position," and discouraged further investment in American agriculture.[38] Herbert Myrick, a sugar beet expert with the agricultural research firm Orange Judd and Company, blamed competition with European producers on an uneven playing field for stifling the growth of a promising new industry in the United States. By reintroducing protections on domestic sugar, Oxnard, Myrick, and others predicted the beet sugar industry would flourish, creating a new source of revenue for American farmers, establishing new thriving communities around sugar factories, and adding to the general prosperity of the nation.[39]

Passed in 1897, the Dingley Bill was designed to give protection to domestic industries, as well as to replenish the treasury, by levying a tariff on imported sugar. The new tariff maintained the difference that placed a higher duty on refined over raw sugar, and thereby continued to favor the Sugar Trust, which benefited from protections against foreign refined sugar while acquiring raw sugar for refinement at a lower rate.[40] Still, the protection it afforded to farmers within the incorporated regions of the United States proved a major stimulus to beet sugar production. Rural communities in California, Michigan, Utah, and beyond enthusiastically embraced sugar beets; in California, the sugar beet craze pitted rival locales against one another in pursuit of investors interested in building sugar factories.[41] In the two years following the act's passage, an additional twenty-three beet sugar factories were built, the greatest number in California and Michigan, while existing factories expanded their daily capacity for processing beets. By the start of the 1903 harvest season, 55 factories were in operation across the United States. While the tariff encouraged new production, it also advanced beet-producing regions as

[38] *Dingley Tariff Hearings*, 647.
[39] *Dingley Tariff Hearings*, 644-650, 666-670.
[40] Among other provisions, it raised the duties on both raw and refined sugar and replaced the *ad valorem* duty on raw sugar with a specific charge. Blakey, "Beet Sugar and the Tariff," 542-543; F.W. Taussig, "The Tariff Act of 1897," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 12, no. 1 (October 1897): 65.
[41] "Beet Sugar Factory," *Sacramento Daily Union* October 6, 1897; "Ventura County," *Los Angeles Herald*, October 28, 1897.

"domestic" spaces. When the United States expanded into the Pacific and the Caribbean in the following year, arguments as to whether the newly acquired U.S. possessions fell within tariff walls racialized beet sugar production as not only "domestic," but also white, while simultaneously racializing the new sugar-cane producing territories as liminal "foreign" spaces.[42]

The Philippine Tariff Debates: Trade and the Contradictions of Empire

For a new industry poised for dramatic expansion, the timing of the acquisition of several sugar-producing colonies in 1898 could not have been worse. Whereas previously beet producers objected that they could not compete with the cheap labor of Europe, American expansion now brought plantation labor regimes in the Pacific and the Caribbean under the U.S. flag, introducing an entirely new set of concerns around the issue of labor and the future of beet sugar production. The Philippines, in particular, elicited strong objections and ominous predictions, as a largely unknown entity far off in the Pacific peopled by millions of nonwhite subjects. From 1898 to 1909 Congress, the Supreme Court, and American producers debated how the new territory and its peoples fit within the broader economic order of the United States, and particularly, whether it would be subject to tariffs levied on foreign goods. Race and labor were the key terms by which the subject was debated, with American sugar producers demanding that high tariffs be maintained on sugar produced in the Philippines by "coolie" labor.

The tariff debates were part of a larger contest over defining and protecting the "domestic" amid rapid U.S. imperial expansion. As the case of Hawai'i demonstrated, trade relationships that enabled capital investment could be more important than formal annexation in establishing a territory's relationship to the United States. With the Treaty of Paris, U.S. capital

[42] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1902), 87-89; Blakey, "Beet Sugar and the Tariff," 5.

and the U.S. government threatened to make the Philippines "domestic," thereby undermining the position of producers in the continental states. In their arguments before Congress, American sugar producers sought to maintain tariffs on Philippine sugar to protect domestic producers from the competition of cheap "coolie" labor. In 1899, the *Louisiana Sugar Planter and Manufacturer* quoted Henry Oxnard as saying that "the Philippines are an unknown quality, of which we stand in great fear. They are a very dangerous element, on account of the cheap labor." The same issue dedicated a column to sugar and expansion, observing that the inevitable development of the Philippines by American capital meant large plantations worked by Chinese and Filipino laborers, with whom white workers could not compete.[43] Trade in the era of rapid American expansion thus emerged as a thoroughly racialized issue.

As the United States began to assert authority over far-flung territories and regions, the commerce that made possible the expansion of the United States into new markets and territories also destabilized so-called "domestic" production and undermined the efforts of implicitly white American farmers and laborers to reap the fruits of expansion. As the line between "foreign" and "domestic" became increasingly unclear, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the American public openly grappled with the contradictions of empire. Seeking outlets for surplus capital, private American firms invested heavily in "foreign" territories like Hawai‘i and Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, often receiving protections on their investments from the U.S. state in what would eventually be known as "Dollar Diplomacy."[44] In Hawai‘i, the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876 eliminated trade barriers with the United States, encouraging further investment in the islands by private American capital and leading to the eventual overthrow of

[43] *LPSM* 22, no. 18 (May 6, 1899): 276, 298.
[44] Colin D. Moore, "State Building Through Partnership: Delegation, Public-Private Partnerships, and the Political Development of American Imperialism," *Studies in American Political Development* 25, no. 1 (2011): 28.

the Hawaiian Kingdom by American sugar planters in 1893 in a coup d'état supported by U.S. marines called in to protect American interests. Cane and beet producers in the United States had long objected to Hawaiian reciprocity on the grounds that it subjected them to unfair competition from "coolie" labor and strongly opposed the formal annexation of Hawai'i in 1898 on these grounds. Prior to annexation, Henry Oxnard warned that not only would annexation mean that California beet producers had to compete with the Chinese labor of the islands, they faced the even more frightening prospect of Chinese abandoning Hawai'i for California to "compete with the work of our labor at its very home."[45]

But while domestic beet sugar interests framed Hawai'i as a "menace," they found the Philippines more alarming still. For American sugar beet farmers, Filipinos existed within the same racial constellation as Chinese workers, reduced in the American imaginary to "coolies," a category of unfree, racialized labor that threatened to depress the wages of white workers. In nineteenth-century historical sources, as well as more recent scholarship on the matter, the term "coolies" appears to describe Asian migrants coerced into working in the Caribbean. But as Moon-Ho Jung has demonstrated, "coolies" were neither a people nor a legal category: "Rather, coolies were a conglomeration of racial imaginings that emerged worldwide in the era of slave emancipation, a product of the imaginers rather than the imagined." In the late-nineteenth century, ideas about "coolies" shaped American responses to the Philippines. The protection of white, Anglo-Saxon workers from the perceived threat of Asian labor had driven the legislation to formally exclude Chinese laborers from the United States in 1882, but, American beet sugar interests claimed, the incorporation of the Philippines threatened to undermine these protections by opening a "backdoor" to Chinese labor.[46]

[45] "A Menace to California Industry," *San Francisco Call*, October 8, 1897.
[46] Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns

These sentiments found ample support from organized labor. Labor organizations like the American Protective League appealed to the need to protect the high wages of American workers against "coolie labor" from the Philippines. Shortly after Oxnard's first appearance before the House Ways and Means Committee in 1889, *The Defender*, the organization's weekly, pronounced: "Under free foreign trade, absolutely nothing save a trifling cost of ocean freight would stand between laborers in the United States and laborers in China. Therefore, to protect American producers against the low wages current in other countries, merchandise from those countries seeking a market in our own is taxed at the frontier." Tariffs, the article continued, shielded "home labor" against "cheaper foreign labor."[47] Shortly after the Spanish-American War, the American Federation of Labor's Samuel Gompers gave a speech decrying President William McKinley's plans to annex the Philippines, proclaiming: "If the Philippines are annexed what is to prevent the Chinese, the Negritos and the Malays coming to our country? How can we prevent the Chinese coolies from going to the Philippines and from there swarm into the United States and engulf our people and our civilization?"[48] Gompers, who had supported the U.S. war against Spain, was a staunch anti-imperialist on racial grounds, arguing that expansion would open the United States to degraded low-wage workers.

During the early years of American rule, in the midst of the ongoing conflict in the Philippine struggle for independence, the U.S. military government initially treated the Philippines as an occupied territory, using the Spanish tariff as the basis for U.S. customs enforcement in the Philippines and collecting duties on Philippine goods entering the United States as outlined in the Dingley tariff. This policy remained mostly unchanged until the

Hopkins University Press, 2006), 5.

[47] E. A. Hartshorn, "Wages, Living and Tariff," *The Defender*, May 31, 1890 (New York), 2.

[48] Samuel Gompers, "Imperialism, Its Dangers and Wrongs," in *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Stuart B. Kaufman, Peter J. Albert, and Grace Palladino (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 5:28.

Philippine Commission established a new tariff law that went into effect on November 15, 1901. The new legislation closely followed the recommendations and suggestions of American exporting interests, who were primarily concerned with developing a wider market in the Philippines for American goods. Significantly, the new tariff legislation retained import duties on hemp, copra, tobacco, and sugar, the principal exports of the Philippines. Almost immediately, however, the legitimacy of the new tariff law was tested in a series of landmark Supreme Court cases known as the Insular Cases.[49]

The question of collecting tariffs on goods coming from recently acquired territories raised legal and political questions about the relationship between the United States and its new possessions and about the nature of U.S. expansion generally.[50] Through a series of decisions in 1901 the U.S. Supreme Court determined that unincorporated territories like the Philippines and Puerto Rico, though subject to the authority of the United States, were not accorded the rights and privileges conferred by the U.S. Constitution. This ruling that the Constitution does not follow the flag determined that the United States could impose additional taxes on goods coming from its territorial possessions. Amy Kaplan and other scholars have identified these cases as the "constitutional underpinning" of U.S. imperialism, in particular Justice Edward Douglass White's famous opinion in *Downes v. Bidwell* (1901), which established that territories like Puerto Rico were "foreign" to the United States, but in a "domestic sense." This, Kaplan argues,

[49] Pedro E. Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy Toward the Philippines* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947), 31.
[50] The tariff on goods from the Philippines struck many who conducted business in these territories as a violation of the uniformity clause of the U.S. Constitution (art. I, § 8), which required a uniform collection of all federal taxes throughout the United States. In the *Fourteen Diamond Rings Case* (1901), the Supreme Court was asked to determine whether goods imported from the Philippines came from a "foreign country" in the meaning of the Dingley Law. The Justices ruled that the Philippines was not a foreign country, thereby invalidating application of the tariff. However, the ruling of *Downes v. Bidwell* (1901) qualified the meanings of "foreign" and "domestic," clearing the legal path for uneven taxation.

meant that while Puerto Rico and, by extension the Philippines, could be taxed as exporters of foreign goods, neither could claim the sovereignty of an independent nation.[51]

The Insular Cases established the legal precedent by which the United States could assert colonial authority over another territory, but the precise terms under which the Philippines and Filipinos would be incorporated into the economic regime of the United States persisted as a highly contentious issue in debates over U.S. trade policy from 1901 to 1913. The unique conditions of sugar production, its history of slavery and protectionism in the United States, and its importance to the Philippine economy meant that much of the debate would center on the production of this key commodity, with Philippine and American sugar producers alike staking claims to a privileged position in the U.S. market.

In particular, the question of whether goods imported into the United States from the Philippines, and vice versa, should be duty free remained unsettled. In January 1902, the Senate Committee on the Philippines proposed amendments to legislation that would lower tariffs on Philippine goods to 50 per cent of the Dingley tariff rates. It was widely agreed that free trade between the United States and the Philippines could be disastrous to both. Article IV of the Treaty of Paris required the United States to admit Spanish ships and merchandise to Philippine ports on the same terms as ships and merchandise from the United States for a period of ten years, raising the fear that Philippines might become a backdoor for low-priced European goods. Additionally, the Philippine government had, for many years, raised the majority of its revenue

[51] Carl Plehn, a political scientist who served as the chief statistician on the Philippine Commission in 1900-1901, wrote in 1904 that by articulating the distinction between "domestic" and "foreign, but in a domestic sense," the Supreme Court "found a way to sanction the lack of uniformity in duties between our insular possessions and the United States." Plehn, "The Tariff Relations of the United States and the Philippine Islands," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 23, no. 1 (1904): 15; Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2-3. See also Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009) and James Edward Kerr, *The Insular Cases: The Role of the Judiciary in American Expansion* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1982).

through import duties, and Governor-General William Howard Taft along with others in the colonial administration argued that direct taxation was not then a viable option. At the same time, Philippine sugar planters, staggered by ongoing warfare and epidemics that struck people as well as livestock, appealed to Congress for a reduction or elimination of the tariff on Philippine goods in an effort to stimulate economic development and compensate for their loss of the Spanish market.[52]

In 1902, in its third annual report on the conditions of the islands, the Philippine Commission recommended, among other things, that Congress reduce tariff duties imposed on goods imported into the United States from the Philippines to no more than 25 percent of the rate imposed by the prevailing Dingley tariff law. Lowering tariff duties, the Commission argued, would provide economic relief to the war-torn islands by opening the U.S. market to Philippine sugar and tobacco—mainstays of the Philippine economy. The Commission further urged Congress to lift restrictions on the ownership of land in the Philippines by individuals and corporations to encourage outside investment in Philippine agriculture. Under American land laws in the Philippines, corporations could own no more than 2,500 acres, far short of the requirements for the kind of large-scale agricultural enterprises that U.S. administrators envisioned for the colony. By lowering tariffs and reforming land laws, the Commission sought to encourage the movement of capital into the Philippines to stimulate development, a central feature of the American project of "benevolent assimilation."[53]

Not surprisingly, American sugar as well as tobacco interests objected to any lowering of tariff duties with the Philippines. On January 9, 1902, the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association

[52] For an overview of U.S. tariff legislation toward the Philippines up to and including the 1902 tariff act, see Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy Toward the Philippines*, ch. 2.
[53] *Third Annual Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1902*, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 6-7.

endorsed and ratified a resolution passed by the American Cane Growers' Association protesting the Philippine Commission's recommendation, calling it an "unnecessary stimulation of the sugar and tobacco industries of the Philippine Islands by means of further tariff reduction, thus encouraging the people of these islands where labor is but a few cents a day, to produce these things which this country can produce." It further resolved, "That this association is unalterably opposed to the proposed introduction of Chinese contract labor into either the Hawaiian or the Philippine Islands."[54] For the time being, however, pragmatic concerns about generating revenue for the Philippine government and protecting American sugar and tobacco producers limited tariff reforms. A new tariff law enacted on March 8, 1902 levied duties on Philippine goods imported into the United States at a rate of 75% of the full Dingley tariff. Despite the small reduction in duties, the tariff barrier remained too high for Philippine sugar to gain a foothold in the American market or to stimulate investment in agricultural production on the islands, and Philippine sugar continued to languish.[55]

Both those in favor and those opposed to reducing duties on Philippine goods believed that doing so would stimulate development in the islands. But the economic conditions of the Philippines continued to deteriorate. In the months following the passage of the 1902 tariff, outbreaks of rinderpest continued to wipe out the carabao that Filipinos used as draft animals while locusts destroyed the year's rice crop. In addition to suffering these calamities, the tariff failed generate sufficient revenue for the Philippine government. In 1905, the U.S. Congress began a series of hearings on a bill that would reduce duties on Philippine sugar and tobacco imported into the United States to 25% of the Dingley tariff rate, the latest of many efforts to

[54] *LPSM* 28, no 3 (January 18, 1902): 42-44.
[55] John A. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 53.

revise the Tariff Act of 1902 that began within months of the act's passage. The tariff continued as a source of conflict among lawmakers trying both to expand U.S. trade and to protect American industry, colonial administrators seeking the economic development and moral "uplift" of the Philippines through commerce, and the various planting and refining interests on both sides of the Pacific vying for privileged access to the American market. At stake, according to those who opposed such a revision, was the protection of American workingmen from a flood of cheap Philippine goods.[56]

On December 18, 1905, Major Aaron Gove, representing the beet sugar industry of Colorado, testified before the U.S. Congressional Committee on Ways and Means in opposition to a bill proposing a reduction of tariff duties on goods imported from the Philippines. He had been commissioned by Colorado sugar interests to visit the U.S. colony the previous summer to investigate the present conditions and future prospects of the sugar industry there. Testifying as an expert witness, Gove stated emphatically his opposition to the bill on the grounds that if import taxes were lowered, cheaply produced Philippine sugar would flood the U.S. market, eventually driving out of business the fledgling American sugar beet industry that the United States had fostered through the protectionist tariff.[57]

By 1905 Philippine sugar production had never amounted to a significant force in world sugar production.[58] But its potential for expansion, American sugar interests warned, the vast,

[56] Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy Toward the Philippines,* 54-56.
[57] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Philippine Tariff: Hearings before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 59th Congress, 1st Session, December 1905 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 62 (hereafter cited as *Philippine Tariff Hearings*).
[58] As of 1905, Philippine sugar exports had reached their peak in 1893 with exports of approximately 250,000 long tons. These figures fell drastically during the wars and subsequent epidemics, population displacements and other calamities of the late 1890s to a low of just 34,750 long tons in 1903 and had rebounded only to approximately 106,000 long tons by 1905 with U.S. statistical records reporting dim prospects for improvement in the near future. By comparison, Hawaiian sugar production grew steadily from approx. 150,000 long tons in 1893 to 380,000 long tons in 1905 and Cuba from 815,000 to 1.2 million long tons during the same time period, both with bright prospects for future expansion. From, United States Treasury Department, *The World's Sugar Production and Consumption,*

untapped productive capacity of the tropics, loomed large as an ever-present threat to American industry. The Philippines, said Gove, was capable of producing many times more sugar than the world could consume: "All that is necessary is for a man to go to work, having the proper tools, and turn the soil and raise the crop."[59] With millions of acres of undeveloped land and an abundance of cheap, tractable labor, Gove testified, the potential output of sugar from the Philippines was "incalculable; beyond the comprehension, almost, of any man."[60] Echoing Gove's concerns, Watts S. Humphrey, a representative of Michigan sugar beet farmers, also spoke of the threatening fecundity of the tropics. Although Philippine sugar, in its present state, posed no threat to domestic producers, Humphrey cautioned that the Philippines had some of the most fertile land in the world, and that by simply introducing modern machinery, Philippine sugar would flood the American market, edging out American producers who simply could not compete with the cheap labor and hyperproductive soils of the Philippines.

The frightful specter of a superabundant Philippines raised by Gove, Humphrey, and others opposed to reducing tariffs on Philippine goods reflected a late Victorian-era discourse on tropicality that equated the fertility of the tropics with fatal excess.[61] This discursive representation painted the tropics as both a place of unimaginable productivity and of moral and racial degeneration. Senator Francis Newlands of Nevada argued that the abundance of the tropics had bred indolence among the natives and led to degradation and slavery; in no case, he claimed, "has enterprise been successful in the Tropics except under a system of either enslaved

showing the Statistical Position of Sugar at the Close of the Nineteenth Century, O.P. Austin (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), 2651-2668, and Philippine Sugar Association, *Facts and Statistics about the Philippine Sugar Industry* (Manila: Sugar Press News, 1928), tables i and ii.

[59] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 61.

[60] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 62.

[61] For scholarship on tropicality see David Arnold "'Illusory Riches': Representations of the Tropical World, 1840-1950," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, no. 1 (2000); Nancy Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 6-18; David Livingstone, "Tropical Climate and Moral Hygiene: The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate," *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999): 93-110.

labor or of forced labor." The fear was that lowering the tariff would induce a flood of American and foreign capital investment into the Philippines, unleashing the overwhelming productive capacity of the "dark tropics" onto the American market.[62]

In fact, it would take far more than a little American capital and ingenuity to overcome the enormous social and infrastructural challenges of the archipelago. Although their fears of being displaced by Philippine sugar were largely overblown, their arguments reflected the rising uncertainty of their economic position amid imperial expansion into sugar-producing regions of the Pacific and the Caribbean. For these farmers, the tariff question tapped into fears about the rapidly changing nation and their place within it. Among American sugar producers, small farmers and large plantations alike were under the thumb of the great "sugar trust," the American Sugar Refining Company. Farmers who prided themselves on their independence found themselves beholden to the owners of mills that were rapidly being consolidated under the American Sugar Refining Company, which dictated the prices farmers could command for their produce.[63] Not surprisingly, the sugar trust was in favor of reduced tariffs, even the complete abolition of trade barriers, on sugar from the Philippines, as well as the Caribbean, as the source of raw materials.

Though they still commanded significant political influence, American sugar planters, whether they specialized in beets or cane, found themselves vulnerable to the dislocating effects of U.S. capital expansion, which they understood and projected in racial terms. In speaking before Congress, beet sugar farmers and domestic cane producers framed the tariff issue as a question of protecting white American labor from the incursions of raw materials produced by cheap, racially degraded labor. Representing Michigan beet sugar farmers, F. R. Hathaway

[62] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 111.
[63] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 93.

described the labor regime in the Philippines as "semi servile," worse than the slave system in the United States before the Civil War. He asked the committee whether, "it is sound American policy to bring the American laborer into competition with that kind of labor in the production of sugar? Whether you prefer to have the farmer receive $2.31 a hundred for every pound of sugar he brings to the factory in its raw state, and the American laborer to receive from $1.50 to $2 per day, or whether you prefer to build up a semi slave system in the Philippines and tell the farmer to abandon beet raising in the states?"[64]

Invoking the racialized slavery of the pre-Civil War American South, Hathaway constructed Filipinos as irrevocably backward and degraded labor, suggesting that lowering tariffs on Philippine goods was antithetical to the cause of free labor for which the war was fought. J. L. McFarlin, a Florida tobacco farmer opposed to the legislation, asked the committee to consider who would benefit from such legislation and insisted that "a native of the United States or a person belonging to the Caucasian race should have more weight than a native of the Philippine Islands." "As to whom this reduction would benefit," he continued, "I daresay it will not be the natives of the islands, but shrewd Americans and foreigners who see the opportunity and benefit from what, in my judgment, is class legislation."[65] Presumably, the highly capitalized manufacturers of the United States would benefit from the raw materials produced by cheap foreign labor, displacing American farmers who could not compete with the low prices of production in the Philippines.

Though the 1905 bill died in committee, it established the terms by which the Philippines' economic incorporation into the United States would be debated in the coming years. These debates resulted in the passage of the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act in 1909, which

[64] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 33.
[65] *Philippine Tariff Hearings,* (1905), 142.

allowed for the duty-free entry of up to 300,000 tons of Philippine sugar into the United States, which, at the time, was far more than Philippine planters were capable of producing. But access to the U.S. market enabled by the 1909 act did not mean full incorporation into the United States. As it became clear in the 1905 hearings, access was predicated on the presumed backwardness of the Philippines and enacted for the purpose of racial uplift and development. Ironically, such incorporation within the U.S. market resulted in the increased economic dependency of the Philippines on the United States, seemingly undermining the goal of developing the Philippines into an independent nation. The remainder of this chapter focuses on these debates, interrogating the racialized construction of "foreign" and "domestic" to generate new insights into how the Philippines and Filipinos were to be incorporated within the U.S. empire as producers and as colonized subjects.

"Benevolent Assimilation" and Competing Claims to U. S. Empire

While beet producers in the United States framed their arguments against tariff reduction around the protection of American labor, Philippine sugar planting elites countered by demanding consideration as wards of the United States. As John Larkin illustrates in his study of sugar in the development of modern Philippine society, sugar production played a central role in the creation of a Philippine elite whose wealth and status depended on working with foreigners to develop the export economy. Their need to secure overseas markets, Larkin argues, strengthened the ties of dependency that characterized U.S.-Philippine colonial relations. Despite their reservations over the implications such a policy would have for future possibilities for Philippine independence, they set their sights on American investors to stimulate development and to rebuild from the devastation of ongoing warfare and epidemics. Colonial administrators,

likewise, looked to American investment to boost the Philippine economy in pursuit of the American objective of "benevolent assimilation."[66] Such arguments reflected the uneven and unequal incorporation of the Philippines into the U.S. economy and productive regimes.

Philippine elites and American colonial administrators who hoped that annexation would expand the market for Philippine sugar and promote the flow of U.S. capital into the islands confronted a difficult political terrain in the United States. With the Treaty of Paris, Philippine sugar producers found themselves enmeshed in a dense imperial network that included cane producers in Hawai'i and Louisiana, sugar beet farmers in California and Michigan, financiers in New York, refiners along the East Coast, and a vast global labor force of displaced workers recruited and transported across colonial and national borders. In August 1905 Secretary of War William Howard Taft led a joint congressional commission to the Philippines to investigate the economic conditions of the islands and conduct public hearings on the proposed tariff reduction. Their testimony involved, on the one hand, a defense of the Philippine sugar industry against charges that unfettered access to the U.S. market would undermine the domestic sugar industry of the United States, and, on the other, a series of legal arguments that as a U.S. territory the Philippines was entitled to equal access to U.S markets. Uniting these concerns was the argument that the tariff was a prohibitive tax that hindered the development of the Philippine sugar industry, and by extension, the Philippine people. To make this argument Philippine elites and colonial administrators mobilized racial constructions of "little brown brothers" to implore the United States to take up the white man's burden, reinforcing ideas about Philippine backwardness.[67]

[66] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 8.
[67] U.S. Congress, Joint Congressional Party, *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands upon the Proposed Reduction of the Tariff Upon Philippine Sugar and Tobacco, the Extension of the United States Coastwise Navigation Laws to the Philippines, and the General Economic Conditions in the Islands, held during the month of August 1905*,

The Philippine sugar industry at the beginning of the twentieth century was in a state of complete disarray. In making their case before Congress, Philippine sugar planters emphasized their desperate material needs, while reassuring the commission that they posed no threat to American industry. Among the many problems that plagued Philippine agriculture in the early decades of the twentieth century was the absence of financial resources. Pampangan sugar planter Leon Miguel Heras identified the lack of capital as the principal cause for the decline of the Philippine sugar industry, a statement echoed by planters from the sugar-producing island of Negros.[68] Anticipating the claims to be made by American sugar interests about the vast productive capacity of the Philippines, José R. Luzuriaga, a prominent sugarcane farmer who also served on the Philippine Commission, opened the hearings in the Philippines with a statement on the tremendous obstacles faced by Philippine sugar producers. To begin with, he said, the capacity for Philippine sugar production had been severely diminished by war, locusts, the rinderpest epidemic, and other diseases. Furthermore, Philippine methods of production were so rudimentary that in its best years Philippine sugar could not compete with sugar produced in America by advanced scientific methods. Philippine sugar production also suffered from an acute shortage of labor, a problem that predated U.S. involvement, but was no doubt aggravated by war and epidemics.[69]

The greatest obstacle to the improvement of the Philippine sugar industry, however, was that the infrastructure and production methods in Philippine sugar were very out of date. W. C. Welborn pointed to the prevalence of animal-powered mills (as opposed to steam powered), the low sugar yields of Philippine cane, the complete lack of fertilizer, and the absence of centrifugal

(Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1905), 68-71 (hereafter cited as *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*).
[68] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 7-8, 26-27.
[69] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 5.

sugar—by then the global standard for commercial sugar production—to illustrate how far the Philippine sugar industry lagged behind.[70] Huge infrastructural challenges, particularly, a lack of credit and transportation systems out of repair, further compounded these issues.[71] "There is room for considerable increase in sugar output in the Philippines," Welborn acknowledged, "but the capital and the initiative and the organizing ability must largely come from the outside and join with the people here who own the lands."[72] Commissioner Luzuriaga agreed that the Philippines would need outside help to rebuild, but he indicated that trade circumstances would have to be revised for this to happen. "We would wish and hope for American capital," he told the commission, "but we do not think it will come under the present circumstances and conditions."[73]

The developmental problems went beyond the disruptions of armed conflict and natural disaster. Those in favor of reducing the tariff, both American and Filipino, pointed to U.S. colonial policy as an impediment to Philippine growth. American land ownership laws in the Philippines restricted individuals to 16 hectares of land and corporations to only 1,024 hectares. (By contrast, the more liberal land laws in the various territories of the Caribbean produced individual company landholdings ranging from several hundred to several hundred thousand acres, many of which were vertically integrated with the ASRC-dominated sugar refining industry in the United States. In Cuba alone, the Sugar Trust controlled more than 500,000 acres of land by 1910.[74]) These limitations, Philippine sugar producers and American colonial administrators agreed, were far too little to support sufficient cane production for a profitable

[70] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 48-49.
[71] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 50.
[72] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 52.
[73] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 12.
[74] Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 76, 80.

milling operation and therefore discouraged would-be investors. Welborn suggested a doubling of the allowance for corporate land ownership to induce American capital to the Philippines.[75] Indeed, allowing for larger landholdings might have induced more investment: in 1909, an American syndicate representing American sugar giant Horace Havemeyer of the American Sugar Refining Company exploited a loophole that exempted church-owned lands from the land ownership law to purchase 18,000 hectares of friar land to erect a modern sugar central in San Jose, Mindoro. Though the mill ultimately failed due to an outbreak of malaria, poor soil, and an inadequate workforce, it provided a model for large, highly capitalized mills that would soon be repeated throughout Philippine sugar lands.[76]

While American sugar interests on one side of the debate sought to maintain the tariff as a protection from the incursions of a foreign, racialized other, colonial administrators in the Philippines pursued its reduction or elimination as a means of racial uplift, with the two sides employing a shared racial discourse that constructed Filipinos against free white labor. Testifying in support of the bill, Governor-General Luke E. Wright drew comparisons between the Philippines and the post-Civil War American South to illustrate the challenge that lay before them. Referring to freed slaves and their descendants, he asserted that even American southerners who were "educated and indoctrinated with all the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon," struggled for many years to rebuild. How then, asked Wright, "when we come to deal with the Filipino, living as he does in a tropical climate, slow to change…how can we expect in a decade or even a generation to convert him to up-to-date methods?" Wright, a veteran of the Confederate

[75] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 62.
[76] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 58.

army, emphasized the paternalistic obligations the United States bore in aiding in the development of Filipinos.[77]

Secretary of War Taft, a strong proponent of free trade with the Philippines, argued that such development required that they train and educate Filipinos. To clarify, he explained, "I do not mean in universities; I mean a training and organization for the purpose of teaching them how to work, and that the growth of any industry depends upon that kind of development here."[78] W. C. Welborn of the Philippine Bureau of Agriculture concurred and stated explicitly the racist assumptions on which these goals were founded, noting, "the present generation of Filipino people is without muscular development, without the habit of sustained industry, and lacking in that acquisitive ambition to make them steady laborers."[79] The incorporation of the Philippines into the United States was predicated on the idea of Filipino backwardness simultaneously rendering them subjects of the United States while also constructing them as racially unfit for equal citizenship. Their inclusion depended on their status as child-like wards, including them within the state while excluding them from equal citizenship.

When speaking before a Philippine audience in 1905, Senator Francis Newlands, who opposed tariff reduction, raised concerns about the type of education that would emerge alongside the development, which he believed would result from the proposed legislation. For Newlands, Hawai‘i served as a cautionary tale about the effects of extending free trade to tropical territories. The plantation culture that emerged with the introduction of American capital to the islands, was characterized by large populations of Japanese and Chinese workers attached to each estate who, Newlands warned, "have no interest in the soil; they are employed there in a

[77] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 262.
[78] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 42.
[79] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 53.

capacity that does not train them for the duties of citizenship." That situation was acceptable in Hawai'i, he conceded, but in the Philippines, they had different plans for the natives, plans for "bettering them." Newlands asked the committee to consider, "whether, were we to permit these large plantations and large numbers of laborers attached to the soil, we would develop them in the duties of citizenship and in their capacity for self-government."[80] "If we intend to hold the Philippines permanently our tariff policy should be different from that which would obtain if our intention is only to hold them until the Philippine people are ready for self-government," he argued before Congress months later. "But, without introducing partisan politics at all into the discussion here, I think it is perfectly clear from the action of both parties that the purpose is not to permanently retain the Philippines."[81]

Like his counterparts in the tariff debate, Senator Newlands saw trade policy as an integral part of the colonial project of racial uplift and acted on common racist assumptions; where he disagreed was in how he envisioned the Philippines fitting in with broader U.S. systems of production. Though he invoked paternalistic obligation when speaking before a Filipino audience just months earlier, speaking before Congress Newlands was less concerned with enacting a policy of racial uplift than with relieving the United States of the burden of its colonial wards. Indeed, in spite of his earlier testimony that free trade with the Philippines would lead to the development of a plantation culture like Hawaii's that ran counter to the goal of uplift, Newlands argued that Congress should take measures to concentrate sugar holdings into large plantations to solve Philippines' economic woes. He proposed direct aid, rather than free trade, to establish agricultural banks that would provide the capital necessary for modern mills and centralized rail systems. Once properly trained in modern agricultural and business methods, he

[80] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 77-78.
[81] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 110.

reasoned, Philippine sugar should be able to compete in the world market independent of U.S. supervision or sponsorship.[82]

The Philippine sugar planting elite, anxious to maintain its status in Philippine society, proved willing to forestall independence in exchange for access to the U.S. sugar market. Mindful of the concerns coming from American protectionists and pro-independence Filipinos that free trade would foster dependency on the United States, Philippine sugar planters argued that in entering the U.S. market for sugar, they merely aimed to leverage higher prices from Japan and China, then the two largest markets for Philippine sugar. Luzuriaga testified, "In asking for the abolishment of the duty on our sugar imported into the United States we do so principally for the purpose of securing better prices from our present consumers, the Chinese and Japanese, inasmuch as, by having another market for our sugar, they could not impose prices on us."[83]

Yet, as everyone acknowledged, lowering tariff barriers would draw the Philippines and the United States closer together economically, and many Filipinos in government vigorously opposed the tariff reduction. When another bill proposing lower tariff rates on Philippine goods came under consideration in 1909, the Philippine Assembly, which acted as a lower house of representatives in relations to the U.S.-led Philippine Commission, passed a resolution opposing the adoption of the bill on the grounds that it would destroy competition from foreign goods in the Philippines, giving American producers free reign to dictate the terms of trade. Pablo Ocampo de Leon, then a Philippine Resident Commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives, introduced the resolution in a speech before Congress by asking, "is not there a

[82] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 120.
[83] *Public Hearings in the Philippine Islands*, 10. See also the testimony of Esteban de la Rama and Juan de Leon pp. 39, 150.

danger that the future independence of the Philippines would be hindered by the ties consequent upon the establishment of free trade? The trusts and other corporations that would establish themselves in the Philippines, encouraged by free trade, will oppose a formidable barrier against Filipino freedom. With elements of this kind to contend…the economic ruin of the Philippine Islands and the premature death of the political ideals of the Filipinos are a sure prediction."[84] Trade would thus be in the hands of Americans, and the Philippine government, unable to meet its financial obligations, would collapse.

The Philippine Assembly's resolution received little consideration in the congressional hearings, and the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act was soon signed into law, allowing large quantities of Philippine agricultural goods to enter the U.S. market duty-free. The amount of Philippine sugar allowed far exceeded Philippine production at the time, essentially meaning free trade between the United States and the Philippines. Though this would make it appear that the Payne-Aldrich Act was a loss for producers in the incorporated United States, competition from far more advanced sugar producers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Hawai‘i ensured that the scenario of unchecked growth fueled by U.S. capital would never take place. By the time the Underwood-Simmons Act of 1913 allowed for unlimited Philippine sugar to enter the U.S. market, the "fear" of Philippine production overshadowing American industries was no longer a major concern of U.S. producers.

[84] Pablo Ocampo de Leon, "Speech of Hon. Pablo Ocampo de Leon, Resident Commissioner from the Philippine Islands Opposing the Free Trade Relations between the United States and the Philippine Archipelago, provided in the Payne Tariff Bill," House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., April 2, 1909 (Washington: Press of Shaw Bros., 1909), 4.

White Workers in a Global Industry

In 1911, John D. Spreckels, son and successor of Claus Spreckels, testified before a congressional committee investigating the American Sugar Refining Company, half-owner of Spreckels's Western Sugar Company, for antitrust violations. During the hearings, he gave an overview of the division of labor in the beet sugar industry. The field work, he explained, was typically done by contract, "and it is usually done by the Japanese, the only people we can get." White men, he explained, refused to work in the fields.[85] As a matter of fact, he testified, "the farmer hails with delight the opening of a factory, because his sons and his farm hands, if he wants to keep good men, after the harvest is in, can get employment in the factory." Removing the tariff on sugar, he argued, would mean the death of the beet-sugar industry in the United States, with disastrous consequences for the humble white American farmer.[86]

The arguments against lowering the tariffs on sugar entering from the Philippines were primarily about improving the lives of "domestic" workers and protecting them from workers racialized as "foreign." The town of Oxnard, and many others across the country, flourished with sugar production. But the celebration of new markets for farmers and factory jobs obscured the growing reliance on low-wage migrant workers that made possible this new prosperity. Moreover, the celebrated independence of sugar beet farmers was increasingly threatened by the monopolistic behavior of major beet sugar producers and the Sugar Trust. Although the interests of figures like Oxnard and Spreckels briefly aligned with the populist objectives of people like Francis Newlands, the sugar titans were primarily concerned with maximizing profits, which ultimately put them into conflict. Early boosters of the beet sugar industry like Claus Spreckels and Henry Oxnard invoked much older ideas of Jeffersonian agrarianism to promote the budding

[85] *Hardwick Hearings,* 955.
[86] *Hardwick Hearings,* 957.

industry. But for the farmers themselves, sugar beets represented an opportunity to enter the marketplace as businessmen on an ostensibly equal footing. The wage-labor dependent agribusiness system that emerged developed far differently from the agricultural model that Oxnard, Spreckels, and the USDA promoted.

By 1897 it was a well-established practice in California to contract the physically demanding work of hoeing, thinning, weeding, and topping beets to immigrant Italian, Chinese, or Japanese laborers.[87] By 1903, Oxnard's beet farmers relied on more than 1,300 Japanese and Mexican laborers to cultivate the beet fields that supplied the Oxnard factory. That year, more than 1,200 workers organized as the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association (JMLA) went on strike, threatening to bring beet sugar production in Oxnard to a halt.[88] The farms and factories that formed the basis of prosperity for countless communities through the "sugar beet belt" relied increasingly on foreign contract workers to perform the arduous labor of cultivating the gardenlike crop even as beet sugar interests portrayed foreign labor as an existential threat.[89] Tariffs channeled and controlled the movement of goods to promote the interests of American farmers, who, in turn, relied upon migrant labor—new "coolies" in an emergent labor regime.

When Claus Spreckels traveled to his native Germany to learn about the beet sugar industry, he was inspired by the potential of beet sugar for uplifting entire communities. After a while, he told a reporter in 1892,

> I want to get the farmers to own the beet factories and make their own sugar. I want them to do as they do in Germany. Let them send their boys to the refiners to learn the trade of sugar-making; let them give their children a lesson in industry and give them at the same

[87] "His Hobby is Beets," *San Francisco Call*, September 18, 1892.
[88] Tomás Almaguer, "Racial Domination and Class Conflict in Capitalist Agriculture: The Oxnard Sugar Beet Workers' Strike of 1903," in *Labor History* 25, no. 3 (1984): 342.
[89] As defined by the Secretary of Agriculture, the "sugar-beet zone" spanned the continent, its territory marked by factories: "From the easternmost factory in western New York they extend through Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho; and from eastern Washington through Oregon and California to southern California and Arizona." U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Report of the Secretary of Agriculture 1907*, report no. 85 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), 5.

> time better health by working a few hours a day in the beet fields during the month the weeding is done; let them share among themselves the residue from the refineries, and if they work one-half as hard in the future as they have done in the past the result can only be prosperity.[90]

The ideal model was the family farm as Spreckels observed it in Europe. USDA handbooks and industry periodicals like the *Beet Sugar Gazette* described sugar beet cultivation as a family affair in which women and children could participate. Children as young as twelve were considered to be particularly suited for the work of hoeing and thinning the beets, which required combing through the fields on one's knees and removing excess beet plants, selecting for the strongest plant. Farmers were advised not to plant too much to beet stock so they could avoid the necessity of hiring outside labor.[91]

The problem, as Spreckels observed, was that farmers simply did not want to do the work of beet cultivation. He explained, "With grain they plant it, let it grow and harvest it; then plant it again, and so on. With beets it is different. They need care, cultivation, and above all the ground must be thoroughly prepared." Of especial consideration were the seasonal demands on labor, particularly during the crucial "thinning" period, for which beet producers relied on large numbers of migrant labor. It was for this reason that the USDA and industry experts discouraged larger holdings than farmers could manage without outside assistance.[92]

The fluctuating labor demands posed a difficult logistical problem for beet farmers. In addition to promoting the use of child labor, the USDA reported on various schemes to employ the urban poor and convicts serving time in local prisons.[93] In practice, however, none of these

[90] "His Hobby is Beets."
[91] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1898), 26-27; *Hardwick Hearings*, 399-416; *LPSM* 22, no. 19 (May 13, 1899):299; Herbert Myrick, *The American Sugar Industry: a Practical Manual on the Production of Sugar Beets and Sugar Cane, and on the Manufacture of Sugar Therefrom* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1899), 126.
[92] "His Hobby is Beets," *San Francisco Call*, September 18, 1892.
[93] *Progress of the Beet Sugar Industry* (1899), 33, 46.

groups proved sufficient. Children required a great deal of supervision, and poor whites left as soon as soon as better opportunities became available.[94] While many farmers did employ local children, within a few short years, most farmers had moved to contracting labor—in California, from China, Japan, and Mexico; in the Midwest, communities of German Russians were established to carry out the unskilled tasks. G. W. Swink, a Colorado farmer who testified on behalf of sugar beet farmers described the labor conditions in his industry: "We employ American boys and girls, some Japs—quite a good many—and Mexicans and some Indians in thinning beets." When labor demands peaked for the thinning and harvesting of beets, Swink explained, Colorado beet farmers went to New Mexico to hire Mexican and Indian laborers, while Japanese workers tended to work continuously through the production cycle. He continued, "The thinning…and the topping of the beets is pretty hard to get our American fellows to do, and they prefer to hire the labor and pay for it." Sugar beet farming had evolved a racial division of labor dependent on "foreign" workers to perform the least desirable tasks.[95]

Far from the ideal of families of citizen farmers rooted in the local community, sugar production, whether within the "domestic" space of the United States or beyond, relied upon racialized, migrant labor. Cane production in Hawai'i and Louisiana evolved as racially stratified plantation cultures, while American beet sugar owed its very existence to subsidies, protectionist legislation, and, increasingly, cheap, "foreign" labor. The real issue then was not, as American sugar cultivators insisted, the protection of white workers, but giving American farmers access to the same racialized labor force that they claimed made Philippine producers so competitive. As

[94] Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 71; Myrick, *The American Sugar Industry*, 126.
[95] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, *Tariff Hearings before the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), 3418 (hereafter cited as *Payne Tariff Hearings*).

McFarlin reasoned in his testimony, "it seems if you are going to lower the duties on the products of these islands, or the manufactured commodities, you should amend your immigration laws so as to give the farmers and manufacturers of America the same opportunity to obtain cheap labor and thereby compete with these commodities." When asked what law prevented him from getting cheap labor, McFarlin alluded to anti-Chinese legislation in the United States, saying, "I can not get cooly labor; that is what they have there." He added, "If you would amend the law so that I could get coolies it would be alright."[96]

American farmers and other agricultural interests frequently used the term "coolies," loosely, as a blanket term for all Asian labor. The use of this term coupled with the growing reliance on migrant labor, especially from Asia, reveals the contours of an emergent labor regime in which the hidden labor of a racialized, noncitizen workforce made possible the newfound prosperity of the countryside. In the face of U.S. expansion and globalization, American sugar producers pursued the tariff as a means of maintaining their privileged position in the U.S. market. Barring such protections, McFarlin imagined a scenario in which the free circulation of goods produced by cheap foreign labor was contingent on the free circulation of the labor itself, new waves of "coolies" for domestic producers. McFarlin's imagined scenario elided the conditions of sugar production in the U.S., which were depended on migrant labor.

The contradictions inherent in the foreign-domestic divide were particularly striking in the case of Hawai'i. Hawaii's sugar planters, like their mainland counterparts, opposed the reduction of tariffs on Philippine sugar. Hawaiian sugar producers leveraged their longstanding commercial ties with the United States to insist upon protections against similar incursions of sugar from the Philippines. Testifying on behalf of haole sugar planters in Hawai'i, F. M. Hatch

[96] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 142-143.

reasoned, “Hawaii is a part of this country, in a sense in which the Philippine Islands never can be,” and was, therefore, entitled to commercial protection.[97] Although Hawai‘i was annexed the same year as the Philippines, the close commercial relationship between Hawai‘i and the United States established by the 1876 Reciprocity treaty proved at least as critical to incorporating Hawaii within the United States as the Organic Act, which established the islands’ formal status within the nation. And as American producers in Hawaii and on the mainland recognized, this is precisely what was at stake in U.S. trade policies toward the Philippines. Echoing arguments previously made against reciprocity and the annexation of Hawai‘i, Hatch denounced the bill as “a most serious menace to the prosperity of the Hawaiian islands,” based on the “almost self-evident proposition that this great encouragement which this bill proposes to the Philippine Islands will lead to a development of the sugar industry there to such an extent as will very seriously impair our industry.”[98]

Hatch made this charge without a hint of irony, even as domestic sugar beet farmers used the example of Hawai‘i as an argument against strengthening commercial ties to the Philippines. Watts S. Humphrey, of Michigan, noted in these debates that the establishment of free trade between the United States and Hawai‘i had caused a stampede of American speculators who quickly placed all the available land in Hawai‘i into sugarcane cultivation, and warned that if the United States established free trade with the Philippines, “It will not only plant all the good lands with sugar, but it will be such an inducement that they, the planters, will flock onto land of all kinds and descriptions just as they did in Hawaii.”[99]

[97] *Philippine Tariff: Hearings* (1905), 55.
[98] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 55.
[99] *Philippine Tariff Hearings* (1905), 82.

Hawai‘i was criticized especially for its use of Asian contract labor. In his testimony before Dingley tariff committee, Henry Oxnard decried the “injustice, if not the absurdity” of reciprocity with Hawai‘i, and warned against the island kingdom’s potential annexation because California would not be able to compete with the “coolie labor” of Hawai‘i.[100] Shortly after annexation Herbert Myrick derided the “false pretenses” under which Hawaii was brought into the United States, namely, that Hawai‘i would abolish its system of contract labor. “But the planters, having got used to coolies, want to keep them,” he wrote, continuing, “In their opposing attitude the Hawaiian planters resemble their prototypes, the slave-holding aristocracy of the south.” He concluded bitterly that Hawai‘i would never be amenable to independent white citizens because the planters “had no use for ‘poor white trash.’”[101]

Adding to the irony, as Hawaiian planters repeatedly argued against lowering tariffs on Philippine sugar, they simultaneously investigated the possibilities of recruiting Filipino workers as a means of countering labor organization among its overwhelmingly Japanese labor force. Several studies have documented the history of Hawaii’s multi-ethnic labor force, cultivated, in part, to ensure divisions among laborers that enabled plantations limit and control labor militancy. Hawaiian sugar interests, many of whom were the descendants of American Christian missionaries, recruited workers in successive waves from China, Japan, Korea, Portugal, and elsewhere beginning in the 1850s. The rapid expansion of Hawaiian sugar cultivation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century would not have been possible without these migrations.[102] Throughout the tariff debates and in correspondence with Hawaii’s Territorial Board of Immigration, Hawaiian planters repeatedly referenced efforts underway to replace their current

[100] *LPSM* 18, no. 4 (January 23, 1897): 50; “A Menace to California Industry,” *San Francisco Call*, October 8, 1897.
[101] Myrick, *The American Sugar Industry*, 13-16.
[102] Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983); and Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*.

workforce with white families, including immigrants from Russia and Portugal who might eventually make "desirable" U.S. citizens. But despite paying lip service to the ideal of free, white labor, the, the Hawaiian sugar industry, and by extension, the Hawaiian economy, was and would remain utterly dependent on migrant labor drawn primarily from Asia.

Conclusion

Against the objections of American sugar producers, the Payne-Aldrich Act reducing the tariff on Philippine sugar was signed into law in 1909, allowing for the duty-free entry of up to 300,000 tons of Philippine sugar into U.S. markets. In 1913, with the passage of the Underwood-Simmons Act, even those restrictions were eliminated. As tariff walls came down, large-scale American investment was actively pursued as the means to develop the Philippine economy, encouraged especially by colonial bureaucrats like Dean C. Worcester, who had helped to engineer Horace Havemeyer's purchase of friar lands in 1909. In 1913, Worcester resigned his post as Secretary of the Interior to accept a position as vice-president of the American Philippine Company, a company organized to promote investment in the islands. Meanwhile, other American interests, including those who had previously opposed reducing trade barriers with the Philippines, began exploring the possibilities of investing in Philippine sugar and other agricultural industries. Hawaiian sugar interests, in particular, figured largely in the investment of American dollars in Philippine sugar. These investments—while not substantial enough to enact the revolution in production hoped for by those who advocated tariff reduction and feared by those who had opposed it—directed the Philippines' sugar-producing regions increasingly toward plantation-style development with the establishment of large, modern sugar refining

operations called centrals. These developments ushered in an era of prosperity for Philippine sugar producers and social dislocation for Filipino workers.[103]

The projection of beet-producing regions as a "domestic" space for white farmers simultaneously racialized Hawai'i and the Philippines as liminal "foreign" spaces. Those mutual racializing processes, in turn, mobilized contradictory movements of capital and labor as well as efforts by the U.S. government to regulate these movements through tariffs and immigration. Although the tariff legislation bore directly on trade, this reorientation of the Philippine economy toward the global market also mobilized Filipino workers across the Pacific. With the subsequent movement of Filipino workers through U.S. circuits of empire, particularly as agricultural laborers in Hawai'i and the West Coast of the United States, the articulation of "domestic" and "foreign" as racially circumscribed categories allowed for the movement of Filipino labor through U.S. states and territories while maintaining their exclusion as "foreign" labor. This labor facilitated the development of these marginal spaces in the U.S. empire. Whether in the cane fields of Hawai'i or the beet fields of the West Coast, cheap, racialized labor made possible the new prosperity of the countryside and the ongoing colonization of the U.S. West.

[103] Filomeno V. Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 215; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 58-59.

Chapter Two

Public Land Practices in Hawai‘i and Racial Formation Across the Pacific

Introduction

Between 1917 and 1921, government leases to over 200,000 acres of public land in Hawai‘i, most of them held by haole sugar producers, were set to expire. By this time, the Kanaka Maoli, the Native Hawaiian people, had suffered devastating population losses, the result of more than a century of European and American encroachment. From an estimated population of 800,000 on the eve of the first European arrival, the Indigenous population fell 83 percent, to 134,925 just 45 years later.[1] By 1910, the census reported just 38,584 Native Hawaiians living in the U.S. territory, with the "full" Hawaiian population declining at a rapid rate.[2] In response to these dire conditions, elite Kānaka Maoli led a political movement to open up some of the lands being used for sugar to rehabilitate the Native Hawaiian population. The idea was to reclaim public lands—lands that had been ceded to the United States government with annexation—from expired sugar leases to establish homesteads for Kānaka Maoli suffering from high rates of poverty, unemployment, and mortality.[3] The resulting Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921 (HHCA), signed into law by President Warren Harding on July 9, 1921, set aside nearly 200,000 acres of public lands for homesteading by Native Hawaiians. But the rehabilitative

[1] Population estimates for Indigenous Hawaiians prior to the first European arrivals vary widely, from 400,000 reported in King David Kalākaua's 1888 study on the myths and folklore of Hawai‘i, to more than 800,000 in a more recent demographic studies. Jon M. Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawaii?* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 21; David Kalakaua, *The Legends and Myths of Hawaii: The Fables and Folk-Lore of a Strange People* (New York: C. L. Webster & Co., 1888), 23; Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 141.

[2] As of 1910, the census designations "Hawaiian" and "part-Hawaiian" referred to Kanaka Maoli, those of Indigenous descent within the Hawaiian islands. *Thrum's Hawaiian Almanac and Annual*, 1911 (Honolulu: Thos. G. Thrum, 1911): 19 (hereafter cited as *Thrum's*).

[3] J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 67-69.

efforts of the HHCA were ultimately undermined by plantation interests that successfully lobbied Congress to limit both the qualifying lands and potential beneficiaries of the law.

Initially conceived as a means of reversing the disastrous effects of settler colonialism on the Kanaka Maoli, the HHCA ultimately advanced settler colonialism through a genocidal process of racialization written into the law. As Congress debated the bill, plantation interests campaigned for a narrow definition of "Native" within the meaning of the law to limit the number of eligible beneficiaries. They also lobbied lawmakers to ensure that the lands selected for the homesteading efforts were not already under cultivation. At the time of the law's passage, lands already under cultivation accounted for nearly all of the arable land in Hawai‘i, which had been developed by sugar planters in the decades following the Treaty of Reciprocity (1876) and annexation (1898).[4] In the law's final iteration, to qualify for the homesteading program individuals had to have a blood quantum—the proportion of their Native Hawaiian ancestry—of 50 percent or greater. In a detailed study of the HHCA, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui demonstrates how the U.S. government racialized Kānaka Maoli through the enactment of land laws that undermined their broader land and sovereignty claims: the 50-percent rule, she explains, not only limited the number who could claim homesteading lands by narrowly defining who counted as "Native," it also reframed Native Hawaiians' legitimate legal claims to their homeland as welfare and charity, with far-reaching implications for present-day sovereignty movements in Hawai‘i. By linking Hawaiian identity to a biological concept of race, the law forced the inclusion of the Kanaka Maoli into the U.S. nation-state, undermining assertions of self-determination and attempting to erase Native Hawaiian identity through a process of assimilation.[5]

[4] Ulla Hasager and Marion Kelly, "Public Policy of Land and Homesteading in Hawai‘i," *Social Process in Hawai‘i* 40 (2001): 8.
[5] Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 8-9, 18.

This chapter is about land and the production of race. It argues that race and the U.S. empire were mutually constituted through the productive and social relations embedded in land practices. Specifically, land practices formed around sugar produced race and enabled the expansion of the U.S. empire. Through land laws, the United States has enacted Indigenous dispossession, reproduced whiteness, and defined workers as aliens. In the case of Hawai‘i, decisions about the use and disposal of public lands were dominated by an oligarchic group of sugar corporations known as the Big Five. While whiteness defined land laws, land laws also conferred whiteness, as would be the case with Portuguese migrants recruited to Hawai‘i by the territorial government. The HHCA was not the first homesteading project in Hawai‘i: in the early twentieth century, the territorial government attempted a homesteading program designed to encourage white settlement on the islands. While land laws constituted a project of disappearance for Native Hawaiians, they also became a means of defining whiteness and racializing plantation labor.

The efforts of the territorial and U.S. governments both to promote white settlement and to assimilate the Kanaka Maoli reflected the contradictions of colonial economic development in Hawai‘i. The capitalist reorganization of land for the production of sugar generated mass labor migrations that destabilized the racial hierarchy on the islands. Although the Kanaka Maoli population seemed to be on the verge of absolute destruction, the large Japanese population in the territory, particularly the significant presence of Japanese families in Hawai‘i, alarmed many white Americans and figured prominently in the debates over the Newlands Resolution and earlier attempts to annex the islands. Post-annexation, politicians in both the territorial government and in Washington, D.C. grew increasingly concerned about what they saw as an impending “demographic crisis”: the coming of age of thousands of children born to Japanese

parents in Hawai‘i with the rights of U.S. citizenship, including the right to vote.[6] These demographic shifts were the direct result of the plantation-style development that characterized Hawaii's colonization, first by outside capital and then by the U.S. government. Haoles (whites) in government sought to reassert control through land legislation that would maintain control of the land in the hands of white settlers, planters, and the haole-dominated government. Through land legislation, the territorial government attempted to resolve these contradictions through a process of racialization, simultaneously enacting indigenous dispossession and migrant exploitation.

The relationship between land laws and racial formation neither began nor ended with Hawai‘i, but was instead a fundamental characteristic of the U.S. empire. In many ways, the division and distribution of public lands in the HHCA and earlier Hawaiian homesteading efforts bore striking resemblance to the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Dawes Act), which facilitated the expansion and development of the U.S. West by breaking up tribal land holdings to make land available for white settlers. The availability of lands for white settlement was essential to reproducing an idea of American freedom found in free labor ideology. As Eric Foner has argued, through the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, wage labor in the United States was seen as a transitive phase toward true freedom in land ownership, which demanded the opening of western lands.[7] But the liberal commitment to property ownership was bound up with the eradication of the possibility of property for most people. Expansion into the U.S. West—as in the Pacific—demanded Indigenous dispossession with the Dawes Act encouraging the reorganization of land for capitalist agricultural production and defining the capacity for land

[6] Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 129.
[7] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xxv.

ownership racially. This in turn generated demand for cheap, migrant labor, contrary to its stated aims of placing families on farming homesteads. U.S. land legislation defined whiteness through a capacity for land ownership.

By thinking the production of race through land, this chapter further demonstrates how land practices naturalized the incorporation of both Hawai‘i and the continental West as integral parts of the United States, in contrast to territories like the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Hawai‘i was the only overseas territory where the United States attempted large-scale white settlement. Despite some important differences between the Dawes Act and the HHCA,[8] the assumptions embedded in the HHCA, that the Indigenous population would become extinct, reinforced the racial logic of continental expansion. Furthermore, reading colonial land practices in Hawai‘i against efforts to "develop" the rural parts of the U.S. West draws attention to the fact that colonization of the U.S. West was ongoing as the United States advanced across the Pacific. Although the HHCA rings similar to the Dawes Act, the Dawes Allotment Act in turn found precedent, not in the United States or Europe, but back in Hawai‘i. The 1848 division of lands known as the Māhele, which privatized Hawaiian lands created an opening for foreign businessmen, who were more familiar with Western systems of land tenure. What followed was the mass dispossession of Kānaka Maoli, and the first major steps to establishing colonial and capitalist hegemony in the islands.[9] As this chapter argues, the common logics of privatization

[8] Kēhaulani Kauanui has cautioned against drawing sharp parallels between the Dawes Act and the HHCA, noting that while the Dawes Act was designed to break up tribal landholdings and quickly absorb Native Americans into mainstream U.S. society, the HHCA sought to rehabilitate Kanaka Maoli communities by returning them to the land, typically concentrating them within communities that tended to be almost entirely made up of Kānaka Maoli. Moreover, contrary to the Dawes Act's effort to instill self-sufficiency through private property, the HHCA did not allow for the ownership of land, instead treating them as lessees of government-owned land set aside for their use, creating a form of lasting dependency. My objective in drawing a connection between these laws is to emphasize the ways in which land legislation simultaneously enacts dispossession and produces race. Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 86-87.

[9] Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 200; Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 75-76.

and dispossession in the 1848 Māhele, the 1887 Dawes Act, and the 1921 HHCA were the result of the intimate relationship between colonization and racialization in capitalist development.

Settler Colonialism & the Commodification of Land: Public Land Policy in Historical Context

The economic development and colonization of Hawai‘i was inseparable from colonial development and imperial competition in the Pacific and the North American West. The Kingdom of Hawai‘i, like many colonized parts of the world, entered the current of Western civilization not through outright conquest, but through trade. After Captain James Cook’s ill-fated voyage brought the first Europeans to the islands in 1778, the growing trade in North American furs helped to establish Hawai‘i as a port of call for ships engaged in trade between Asia and the Americas by the close of the eighteenth century. English, American, and German fleets stopped in Hawai‘i to refuel and replenish essential supplies, over time establishing a regular trade with Native Hawaiians. Whaling ships, which supplied the oil that kept the wheels of the Industrial Revolution spinning, began arriving in great numbers in the 1820s, followed by China-bound merchants and New England missionaries, some of whom settled in Hawai‘i. The rapid growth of trade in the 1820s precipitated the establishment of European and American trading houses and businesses that supplied the ships, lucrative enterprises through which foreigners expanded their influence in Hawai‘i.[10]

Hawai‘i emerged as a center of the growing transpacific trade during a period of social transformation in the archipelago. At the time of Cook’s arrival, the islands and their people were divided among ali‘i nui (ruling chiefs) engaged in intermittent warfare for supremacy over

[10] For an overview of this history that utilizes understudied Hawaiian language sources, Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15-44; Silva’s work critiques earlier scholarship steeped in the colonial tradition, including the comprehensive history, Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 3 vols. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), 1: 82-98.

the islands. In the 1780s a warrior from the ali‘i class named Kamehameha began consolidating his power, forming strategic alliances and deploying his military acumen to unite nearly all of the islands into a single kingdom under his leadership by 1796 (Kaua‘i did not recognize his authority until 1810). The ali‘i continued to rule as a governing class, which owed fealty to the newly established kingdom, while Kamehameha further enhanced his power and prestige through trade with Americans and Europeans, and employed haoles to advise him in matters of trade and diplomacy. Western trade would, over time, prove to be a double-edged sword for Hawaii’s monarch and its ruling class. The high prices commanded by Hawaiian sandalwood, enabled Kamehameha to amass arms and ships, which he used to fortify his position and protect the nascent kingdom from foreign encroachment. But as trade continued to expand during the brief reign of Kamehameha’s successor Liholiho (Kamehameha II), the new monarch and several of the ali‘i below him contracted heavy debts purchasing consumer goods from American and British firms. Foreign governments, engaged in their own inter-imperial rivalries in the Pacific, asserted their presence in the archipelago to protect the commercial interests of their subjects in the islands. In 1826, for instance, the United States sent two American warships to demand payment owed to American commercial agents from the Hawaiian monarch and various ali‘i.[11] Western trade thus made possible the realization of a Hawaiian kingdom that could defend itself against outright conquest, even as it brought Hawai‘i increasingly under Western influence.

Hawaiian commerce with the West continued to expand in the 1830s, and Hawaii’s monarchy and ruling chiefs faced growing pressure from haoles to ensure their property rights in the Hawaiian Kingdom. As agricultural enterprises launched in the 1830s began to yield

[11] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom,* 1: 91.

promising results, European and American interests in the kingdom expanded beyond whaling and trade with China. But an inability to secure ownership rights to Hawaiian lands hindered westerners' agricultural ambitions. Hawaii's chiefs were reluctant to grant land to foreigners, anticipating with a great deal of foresight that by alienating their lands, they would eventually lose sovereignty over them.[12] Prior to haole intervention, the western concept of fee-simple land ownership did not exist in Hawai'i; government and land tenure were interrelated, with ultimate authority and ownership over the land residing with the king. The king reserved some lands for his own use and allotted remaining lands to members of the ali'i class, who paid dues to the monarch in the form of personal service and produce from the land. The ali'i exacted dues from the maka'āinana, the common peoples living on the lands who farmed and fished, receiving patronage and protection in return for their services. The ali'i's possession of the land was revocable and did not descend to the chief's heir upon death, but instead reverted to the king. Though many contemporary American and European observers described this system of land tenure as feudalistic, it was defined primarily through reciprocal social obligations.[13]

Haoles used their growing influence to challenge Hawaii's land tenure practices and secure some of the islands' rich lands for agricultural development. Every Hawaiian monarch beginning with Kamehameha I had employed Americans and Europeans as advisers, while New England missionaries won the conversion of important members of the Hawaiian nobility to put them in a strong position to influence Hawaiian government by the 1830s.[14] The threat of military conquest, manifest in the growing presence of foreign warships, added force to these methods of suasion. After 1830, the British and French governments espoused a growing interest

[12] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 174.
[13] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 39-40; Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai'i?*, 11-18.
[14] Thomas Marshall Spaulding, "The Crown Lands of Hawaii," *University of Hawaii Occasional Papers*, no. 1 (1923): 5; Kuykendall, 1: 154-159.

in the islands, both to counter the American influence in the Pacific and to protect the growing number of their subjects engaged in commerce there. American, British, and French warships made repeated appearances off Hawaiian shores, bringing military officers and other government officials to negotiate on behalf of their subjects who resided in the islands. Backed by military might, they urged the Hawaiian chiefs to recognize foreigners' property rights and to confer to them the privilege of leasing lands for agricultural enterprises.[15]

Having established a strong position in Hawaiian affairs in the previous decades, haoles compelled Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III), who assumed the throne in 1825, to enact a series of major reforms between 1839 and 1850 that reorganized Hawaiian land tenure, outlining a more open system of government that secured property rights to individuals and ushered in foreign investment. In a clear departure from the earlier system of government, the 1839 declaration of rights—also referred to as the Hawaiian Magna Carta—and the subsequent Constitution of 1840 recognized the rights of all persons to their property. Specifically, the Constitution asserted that Hawaii's lands, "belonged to the chiefs and people in common, of whom Kamehameha I was the head, and had the management of the landed property," recognizing for the first time the rights of the ali'i and common people to the lands of Hawai'i. The recognition of property was a calculated effort to preserve the sovereignty of a nation caught at the crossroads of colonizing powers. By bringing Hawaiian laws and institutions in line with Western practices, political scientist Noenoe Silva observes, Kamehameha III "transformed Hawai'i into a nation-state recognized by the would-be colonizing nations, and in doing so he preserved his nation's independence."But at the same time, property rights enshrined in the Constitution became the

[15] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 35-39.

wedge into Hawaiian sovereignty that haoles leveraged over the next five decades in the colonization of Hawai‘i.[16]

More importantly, acting on advice from haole advisers, Kamehameha III and the leading ali‘i viewed private property ownership as a means of preserving the rapidly diminishing Native Hawaiian population. Since the first contact with Westerners during Cook's voyage, epidemic disease devastated the Native Hawaiian population. Missionaries in particular evinced an interest in rehabilitating the Native Hawaiian population, and advised the monarch that the best way to rescue the beleaguered Native Hawaiian population was to remake the maka‘āinana into an independent, land owning citizenry. Gerrit P. Judd, a former missionary and adviser to Kamehameha III, argued that establishing Native Hawaiians on private property would, in effect, "secure a proper reward for their industry, and encourage population by enabling them to provide for and derive profit from their children."By this logic, for the Kanaka Maoli to survive, their material desires and consumer habits also had to be cultivated and increased. The missionaries reasoned that only by becoming consuming subjects would the masses of Hawaii's people recognize the value of private property and learn to be industrious workers capable of developing the immense natural resources of the islands.[17]

Central to Hawaii's shift to a system of private land ownership was the Great Māhele, or division of lands, in 1848. From 1846 to 1855, a Commission to Quiet Land Titles established by Kamehameha III investigated over 11,000 claims, of both Hawaiian subjects and aliens to landed property for which individuals might gain favorable lease terms, and even fee simple title to the land, a great transformation of Hawaiian land tenure practice.[18] But while the Commission

[16] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 43.
[17] Quote from Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 279.
[18] Hawaii, Surveyor General, "A Brief History of Land Titles in the Hawaiian Kingdom," Appendix 1 to *Surveyor General's Report* (Honolulu: P. C. Advertiser Co., 1882), 9-12; Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 277-282.

addressed individual claims, ownership over the majority of Hawaii's lands remained uncertain beyond the vague understanding derived from the Constitution that one third of the kingdom's lands should belong to the king, one third to the landlords (the aliʻi), and the remaining third to the people in common. The Māhele assigned claims for which individuals could receive a fee simple title, dividing the lands of the kingdom into two groups: those belonging to the king and those belonging to the aliʻi, who were refigured under the new system of land tenure as konohiki, or landlords.[19] The king's lands were further divided into his own private lands (the "Crown Lands," meant to support the Hawaiian monarchy) and government lands. The makaʻāinana had rights to the lands on which they lived and worked, but were initially left out of the division until the Kuleana Act of 1850 created a system by which individual tenants could establish claims to lands occupied and improved by them or purchase government lands set aside for Native Hawaiian settlement.[20]

The Māhele formalized private property within the kingdom, rendering land an alienable commodity, a major ontological shift for Kānaka Maoli unaccustomed to the norms of Western land tenure. That began the process by which Native Hawaiians were dispossessed of their lands by foreign capital and white settlers. Once divided and assigned, government lands became available for sale in fee simple and hundreds of thousands of acres were sold to Hawaiian subjects and foreigners to generate revenue for the maintenance of the government, which could no longer count dues or tributes as it had in the past.[21] These developments were particularly

[19] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 42.
[20] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, chap. 4; "A Brief History of Land Titles in the Hawaiian Kingdom," 10-12; Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 284.
[21] The 1901 Report of the Governor of Hawaii noted: "In order to obtain revenue for the maintenance of government extensive sales of lands were made soon after the division of 1848." In 1902 the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico estimated that 500,000 acres of government lands were sold in this way. *Report of the Governor of Hawaii to the Secretary of the Interior* 1901 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901), 8; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, *Special Land Laws for the Territory of Hawaii*, 57th Cong., 1st sess., March 10, 1902.

detrimental to the maka‘āinana. After the ali‘i received their Māhele allotments, the maka‘āinana lost the legal right to occupy and use lands as they had for generations. Many of the ali‘i sold their allotments—often to pay off debts—and the new owners, no longer bound by reciprocal social relations, forced the maka‘āinana tenants off the land. Though the maka‘āinana had the right to establish claims to small plots of land through the Kuleana Act, the burdensome process of filing a claim, the cost of surveying the land, and an unfamiliarity with the concept of private property resulted in a small number of claims being filed. In the end, less than one percent of Hawaii’s land was awarded to maka‘āinana through Kuleana claims. In the sale of both government and privately owned lands, maka‘āinana competed with white settlers from Europe and the United States who had greater access to capital and more experience with land titles. By 1850, the government had sold about 2,700 parcels of land, and though the greatest number of parcels went to Native Hawaiians, foreigners purchased approximately two-thirds of the total acreage.[22]

Instead of transforming Kānaka Maoli into a land-owning citizenry, the establishment of private property effected the dispossession of the majority of Native Hawaiians. The end result was not independent ownership, but debt and landlessness. Debt reverberated through the different strata of Kanaka Maoli society from the Kuleana to the crown, resulting in further dispossessions of Kuleana lands. Of the 30,000 or so Kānaka Maoli eligible to apply for Kuleana lands, only about 8,000 yeoman holdings were created by the act. An act of the legislature barred all Kuleana claims that could not be proved by 1854, a ruling that left the vast majority of Kānaka Maoli landless.[23] The Kuleana act, like the later Dawes Act, was created under the guise of helping Kānaka Maoli to adapt to the new economic realities, but the real effort was to open

[22] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 44-51.
[23] Neil M. Levy, “Native Hawaiian Land Rights,” *California Law Review* 63, no 4 (1975): 848, 856.

lands to white settlement, as in both cases, non-allotted lands would be opened to use by white settlers.

Under the new system of private land ownership the king and the aliʻi lost much of the income that had previously been generated by tenants, and beginning with the death of Kamehameha III, portions of the Crown Lands were sold to settle his outstanding debts. His successor, Alexander Liholiho (Kamehameha IV), exercised personal control over the Crown Lands, liquidating portions for the payment of debts and otherwise alienating them as his private property. Upon his death in 1863 his widow, Queen Emma, sued for her rights to the land as Liholiho's widow, raising the possibility of further dividing the Crown Lands into the private property of the queen and the state property of the monarch. The Hawaiʻi Supreme Court decided against the queen, ruling that the Crown Lands would pass to the succeeding monarch, David Kalākaua (Kamehameha V), though it remained the monarch's prerogative to sell, mortgage, or lease the lands as his own private property. To avoid future controversy, and to prevent further alienation of the Crown Lands, the monarchical legislature under Kamehameha V passed an act in 1865 that rendered the remaining Crown Lands inalienable. Under the new law, the Crown Lands remained undivided until the monarchy was overthrown in 1893. Kuleanas, however, were offered no such protection. A law passed by the Hawaiian legislature in 1874 allowed a lender to auction a borrower's deed without judicial oversight if the borrower fell behind in payments. Many Kuleana owners, unable to keep pace with high interest rates, lost their lands in the process.[24]

One of the major consequences of the 1865 act, which prevented the sale of Crown Lands, was that most of Hawaii's sugar plantations were established on long-term leases rather

[24] Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, chap. 2; Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 112.

than lands held in fee simple, setting the stage for later land controversies under the U.S. government. Prior to the passage of this act, the sugar industry had evolved alongside land laws representing divergent interests and competing logics of development. As the Kingdom of Hawai‘i undertook dramatic reforms in land tenure practices, a commercial revolution was just beginning to take root. In 1835 Ladd and Company, a business partnership founded by New Englanders William Ladd and Peter Brinsmade, established the first sugar plantation in the Hawaiian Kingdom on land leased from the Royal Governor of Kaua‘i. The success of Ladd and Company's Koloa plantation influenced missionaries, local ali‘i, and the king, who began devoting large tracts of land to the cultivation of sugarcane. Though many ali‘i were reluctant, and in some cases strongly resistant, to sacrificing their tenants' labor for sugar production, many also took the view that such economic innovations were essential to reversing the population decline among Kānaka Maoli. Some landlords made contracts with Ladd and Company to grind their cane, while others established their own mills. By 1838 twenty mills operated across the kingdom. In his comprehensive history *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Ralph S. Kuykendall credits Ladd and Company with awakening in the Hawaiian people a spirit of enterprise, noting the liberalizing tendency of the free labor system on the Koloa plantation in contrast to the "feudalistic" system that preceded it.[25]

The idea that Ladd and Company's entrepreneurial efforts transformed Kānaka Maoli into modern, free laboring subjects affirmed the goals of the New England missionaries and haole entrepreneurs who wrote approvingly of the Koloa plantation. But Kanaka Maoli resistance to plantation production belied such optimistic assessments of the transformative effects of wage labor. The lack of enthusiasm among Kānaka Maoli for plantation work

[25] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 182.

frustrated haole planters who saw the expansion of their enterprises curbed by a lack of labor. For the most part, Kānaka Maoli had no use for plantation labor, preferring to cultivate and subsist on the land as they had for generations. As William H. Pease of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society complained:

> The mass of natives in possession of the kalo patch and kula are more independent than their wealthy neighbors. They provide themselves with all the luxuries of a Hawaiian life, poi and fish… What law, then, or system, could you adopt to compel him to work without abridging his freedom. Create wants if you please, they would be supplied by a much less expenditure than would be required of him on a plantation. But a necessity has arisen that our plans be cultivated, for which the skill and capital of the white man are necessary. Should the native refuse to put them in use to render them available by his labor, other hands must and will do it.[26]

Instead of remaking Kānaka Maoli into free laborers, the effect of plantation production as pioneered by Ladd and Company and the Boston missionaries, was to generate demand for additional labor from elsewhere.[27]

Sugar production expanded steadily as the Māhele altered the conditions of land use. At the same time the rapid decline of the whaling industry left the government seeking alternative sources of revenue. These developments coalesced with the U.S. acquisition of California and Oregon, ushering in a boom in the market for Hawaiian sugar from 1849-1850 just as constitutional and legal reforms opened the Hawaiian Kingdom to greater exploitation by outside capital. However, sugar entering the United States faced high tariffs, and during the depression that lasted from 1851-1852 Hawaiian sugar struggled to compete against more cheaply produced sugar from the Philippines and Java. The following decade, the American Civil War provided a

[26] Wm. H. Pease, "The Value of Science, Applied to Agriculture," *Transactions of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society* 1, no. 1 (August 1850): 62.
[27] Nöel Deerr, *The History of Sugar*, vol. 1 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1949), 254.

boost to Hawaiian sugar, but it was the ratification of a treaty of reciprocity with the United States that inaugurated the rapid and sustained development of the Hawaiian sugar industry.[28]

With the Treaty of Reciprocity between the United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom, which took effect in 1876, Claus Spreckels rapidly became the most prominent figure in Hawaiian sugar production. Spreckels, whose San Francisco-based California Sugar Refinery dominated the sugar refining business on the West Coast, used his vast capital resources to develop large-scale sugar plantations. He purchased and leased large tracts of land in central Maui, where he built an extensive irrigation system that brought water to the dry Wailuku plains. Notably, Spreckels manipulated inconsistencies in Hawaiian land laws to gain title to over 24,000 acres of Crown Lands in 1882, despite the 1865 law that prohibited the alienation of these lands. He also acquired water rights by gaining favor with the spendthrift monarch King Kalākaua, to whom Spreckels made a generous "gift" of $10,000 and provided further loans at favorable interest rates. When Kalākaua's ministers did not immediately grant Spreckels's petition for water rights, the monarch dismissed his entire cabinet, and appointed new ministers who approved the petition, earning Spreckels the nickname, "the cabinetmaker."[29] In addition to personal loans, Spreckels provided much of the Hawaiian state's financial backing. By 1884, Spreckels owned $700,000 of Hawaii's $1,300,000 public debt. With Kalākaua under his sway, Spreckels continued to wield sizable influence in Hawaiian affairs until he fell out of favor with the monarch over a loan deal and returned to San Francisco in 1886.[30]

During his brief tenure in Hawai'i, Spreckels had a decisive impact on both Hawaiian land policy and sugar production. But Spreckels's influence was made possible by earlier

[28] Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1: 142-148; 3: 46.
[29] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands* 100-110; Adler, *Claus Spreckels*, 203.
[30] Adler, *Claus Spreckels*, 80-91.

innovations in land tenure, specifically, the institution of private property, and by the Reciprocity Treaty. The replacement of earlier systems of taxation to support the monarchy with the establishment of the Crown Lands created a situation whereby the monarchs found it most advantageous to sell or lease their lands to those with access to capital—primarily, western entrepreneurs. The Reciprocity Treaty then incentivized extensive capital investment in the islands' most promising industry. During Kalākaua's reign (1874-1891), the monarch leased extensive tracts of Crown Lands under thirty-year leases to planters to generate revenue for himself and the government. In the two decades following the Reciprocity Treaty, haole entrepreneurs backed by American and European capital cleared forests and established extensive irrigation networks in their drive to turn all available lands in Hawai‘i to the production of sugar. By 1890, the total amount of government and Crown Lands leased to plantations and ranchers was approximately 750,000 acres, nearly one sixth of all of the land on the islands, including most of the best agricultural lands.[31] From 1876 when the Reciprocity Treaty became law, to annexation in 1898, annual sugar production skyrocketed from 26 million pounds to nearly 445 million pounds.[32] By the time the United States annexed Hawai‘i in 1898, sugar production defined the social, economic, and physical landscape of Hawai‘i.

Importing Americans: Public Land Policy and the Annexation of Hawai‘i

Transforming Hawaii's arable lands to sugarscapes required a vast amount of skilled and unskilled labor. Despite the efforts of missionaries and other haoles to develop Hawai‘i into a nation of yeoman citizens, the adoption of sugarcane as a major export crop set the islands on a

[31] Robert H. Horwitz et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii: An Historical Analysis*, Report No. 5 (Honolulu: Legislative Reference Bureau, 1969), 110.
[32] *Thrum's* (1909): 44.

different path of development. The capital that flowed into Hawai‘i from the West generated migrations of workers, first recruited in large numbers from China, and subsequently from Portugal, Japan, and later, the Philippines. By far the largest number of immigrants bound for the sugar plantations prior to Hawaii's annexation was from Japan. Japanese workers were first recruited to work in Hawaii's sugar plantations in 1868, with the great majority coming after 1885 when the Japanese government signed an immigration agreement with the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, permitting the emigration of contract workers to the islands. By the time of the 1896 census, just before annexation, Japanese on Hawaii's sugar plantations totaled 11,584 workers, approximately 58% of the total plantation labor force, and Hawaii's total Japanese population reached 24,407, over 22% of Hawaii's overall population.[33] Although American and European capital drove the expansion of plantation agriculture that brought Japanese and other migrant groups to Hawai‘i, many haoles in Hawaii's government voiced concern that a large population of legally subordinated workers would lead to the emergence of an oligarchic society like the Old South prior to the U.S. Civil War, and sought to counter the development of plantation agriculture with land laws that favored independent, small-scale farming operations.

The emergence of Hawaii's multiracial workforce as a response to the insatiable labor demands of the major sugar factors has been well documented.[34] In addition to these studies, an analysis of land legislation further reveals the process of racial formation in Hawai‘i. The laws of the Kingdom and later Republic of Hawai‘i produced racialized subjects defined by their control over land and the productive relations that emerged from it. In a process that began with the Reciprocity Treaty and continued well beyond annexation, haoles in government attempted to

[33] *Thrum's* (1898): 32, 43.
[34] Takaki, *Pau Hana;* Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*; Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

shape Hawaii's development with public land laws designed to encourage white settlement through homesteading and the sale of small farms, options which generally excluded Asian immigrants. As early as 1872, before Reciprocity pushed Hawaii's economy inexorably toward plantation-style development, Sanford B. Dole argued that the establishment of an agrarian democratic society was the best form of political and economic development for Hawai'i, and encouraged immigration to fulfill this goal. Specifically, Dole's vision of Jeffersonian democracy assumed immigration from the United States and Europe.[35] But after decades of trying to bring white settlers to Hawai'i, acting governor of the territory of Hawai'i Henry Cooper reported in 1901: "The small farmer, as he is known throughout the Eastern and Pacific States, is unknown here. The man who desires to become a pioneer in this work is welcome…but he will find much to contend with and conditions that are new and untried."[36]

Dole, whose political career spanned the Kingdom of Hawaii through the early territorial period, wielded significant influence in shaping Hawaiian land policy. A Hawaiian-born son of New England missionaries, Dole strongly opposed the widespread use of contract labor in Hawai'i. As a member of the legislature in 1884, Dole drafted the 1884 Homestead Act with the goal of establishing white and Native Hawaiian tenants on fee-simple property. Modeled on the American homesteading act of 1862, the Hawaiian Kingdom's 1884 Homestead Act promoted settlement on lands recently appropriated from Native Hawaiians and rearticulated as "public lands."[37] Under the provisions of the law, individuals could obtain plots of government land from two to twenty acres in size, provided they built a residence and lived on the land for at least three years and paid the purchase price of the land within ten years. But the late-nineteenth century

[35] Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii*, 2-3.
[36] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1901, 69.
[37] "An Act to Facilitate the Acquisition and Settlement of Homesteads," in *Laws of His Majesty Kalakaua, King of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: P. C. Advertiser Co., 1884), 86.

efforts to establish Hawai‘i as a nation of citizen-farmers could not restrain the trajectory of capital toward accumulation and concentration, conditions that produced the demand for masses of imported laborers and limited the possibilities for the small farmer. The 1884 homestead law attracted very few settlers, white or Native: between 1884 and the 1895, when the law was repealed, only 527 homesteads totaling roughly 8,500 acres were established, and of those, only 337 claims were patented.[38]

Efforts to encourage white immigration and settlement were renewed with the dramatic overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by haoles and a growing movement for annexation to the United States. In 1887 a group of pro-annexation businessmen and lawyers known as the Committee of Safety enlisted the help of the Honolulu Rifles, a volunteer militia composed of white Hawaiian citizens, to compel the reigning King Kalākaua to sign a new constitution that diminished the monarch’s power. Known as the Bayonet Constitution, it transferred most of the monarch’s authority to the haole-dominated legislature. Kalākaua’s successor, Queen Lili‘uokalani, attempted to promulgate a new constitution that would restore power to the throne; in response Lorrin Thurston and the Committee of Safety, with the support of the United States military, staged a coup that toppled the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893. At the committee’s request, John L. Stevens, U.S. Minister to the Kingdom, summoned a company of U.S. Marines stationed in Honolulu harbor under the pretense of protecting American lives and property. Backed by U.S. military force, the Committee of Safety forced the queen’s surrender on January 17, 1893 and established the Provisional Government of Hawai‘i. The goal of the Provisional Government had been annexation to the United States, but an American treaty of annexation introduced by President Benjamin Harrison in 1893 failed in the U.S. Senate after Kānaka Maoli and U.S.-

[38] Sanford B. Dole, “Hawaiian Public Lands,” *Independent* 52 (January 25,1900): 225-227; Levy, “Native Hawaiian Land Rights,” 863, fn 113.

based sugar interests protested annexation. The Provisional Government established the Republic of Hawai‘i in 1894 with Sanford Dole as its president.[39]

Maintaining the objective of eventual annexation to the United States, the haole-dominated Republic of Hawai‘i instituted sweeping changes in land laws intended to encourage white settlement and establish Hawai‘i as a nation of small freeholders. Article 95 of the new constitution of the Republic of Hawai‘i declared the Crown Lands to be the property of the Hawaiian Government, clearing those lands to be reallocated, sold, and distributed. In redefining Crown Lands as part of the public domain, Article 95 amounted to a massive land grab, appropriating lands formerly designated as the monarch's private property for redistribution among potential settlers. In the following year, the Land Act of 1895 reclassified the former "Government Lands" and "Crown Lands" together as "Public Lands," eliminating the legal distinction between the two. It explicitly repealed the Land Act of 1865, which had made Crown Lands inalienable, and established a homesteading program to distribute newly classified "public lands." Framed with the intention of opening land for settlement by small independent farmers, the Land Act restricted the length of general land leases to 21 years and limited the leasing and sale of public lands to parcels no larger than 1,000 acres, both measures designed to discourage plantation development.[40]

But even as the Hawaiian Republic advanced an agenda for white settlement, it affirmed the claims of plantation interests and shored up the basis of plantation production. During the constitutional convention at which the Republic was established, delegate H. P. Baldwin of the Big Five firm Alexander and Baldwin, added a clause to Article 95 of the constitution protecting

[39] A full summary of the overthrow can be found in Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 118-130.
[40] Hawaii, Legislative Assembly, "Land Act of 1895," *Laws of the Republic of Hawaii Passed by the Legislative Assembly, Special Session, 1895* (Honolulu: Robert Grieve, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1895), 49-90; Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 192; Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii*, 5-15.

existing leases signed under the laws of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Through the provisions of the Land Act from 1895 to 1899 about 800 citizens of the Republic of Hawaii acquired public lands totaling roughly 40,000 acres, falling far short of the revolution in land tenure promised by Dole and others in government as they pursued annexation.[41] Of these lands, fewer than 10,000 acres came from the former Crown Lands. As Jon M. Van Dyke explains in his comprehensive study of the Crown Lands, when the Republic was established in 1894, the Crown Lands totaled 971,463 acres, but of these, only 94,169 acres were available for lease, sale, or homesteading under the Land Act, most of which were not suitable for agriculture. The vast majority of the Crown Lands were tied up in the thirty-year leases established by King Kalākaua after the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty. As a result, the new Constitution protected plantation interests to the detriment of small farmers.[42]

The Land Act of 1895, together with the 1894 Constitution, produced racial subjects defined by the possibility of independence through land ownership. Though the law was not explicitly anti-Asian—the act itself did not specify racial requirements—it limited the leasing and sale of public lands to any person over the age of eighteen "who is a citizen by birth or naturalization or who has letters of denization."[43] Under the new constitution of the Republic of Hawai‘i the naturalization of an immigrant required that, "He shall be a citizen or subject of a country having express treaty stipulations with the Republic of Hawaii concerning naturalization," the intent and effect of which was to prevent the naturalization of the large population of workers from China and Japan.[44] The land laws of the Republic of Hawai‘i

[41] Horowitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii*, 15.
[42] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 191, 193.
[43] "Land Act of 1895," 62, 74; Dole, "Hawaiian Public Lands," 226-227.
[44] Constitution of the Republic of Hawaii, 1894, art. 18, sec. 5, in *Proceedings of the Hawaiian Constitutional Convention* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette Company, 1894), 8.

produced a social system in which Asian immigrants could be imagined only as labor, reinforcing a norm that would carry over to U.S. annexation.

Land laws and citizenship restrictions notwithstanding, haoles in Hawaii's government perceived the growing Japanese population as a threat to American and European capital interests on the islands, and vigorously pursued both annexation to the United States and white settlement to counter Japanese influence. The *Thrums Annual Hawaiian Almanac* of 1898 reported a "Peaceful Invasion" of Japanese workers, highlighting the Hawaiian Board of Immigration statistic that in the twelve years since Hawai'i established an immigration agreement with Japan, 37,451 Japanese contract laborers landed in Hawai'i on three-year contracts and fewer than one-third returned to Japan at the close of their contracts.[45] Similarly, Lorrin A. Thurston, who had helped to draft the 1894 constitution, warned of the alarming rate at which Japanese entered Hawai'i and established themselves commercially. In his *Hand-book on the Annexation of Hawaii,* a pamphlet published in 1897, Thurston observed that it would not be long before Japanese established themselves as a numerical majority, threatening American commerce and security in the Pacific. The issue, according to Thurston, was no less than the "preliminary skirmish in the great coming struggle between the civilization and the awakening forces of the East and the civilization of the West." Only immediate annexation to the United States, he argued, could contain the growing threat.[46]

Contrary to the professed intention of reform-minded politicians like Thurston and Dole to establish Hawai'i as a nation of independent farmers that would stave off an "invasion" of Eastern forces, the annexation efforts of the short-lived Republic of Hawai'i generated a massive influx of Japanese laborers and shored up the foundations of plantation agriculture. Hawaii's

[45] *Thrum's* (1898): 131.
[46] Lorrin A. Thurston, *A Hand-book on the Annexation of Hawaii* (St. Joseph: A. B. Morse Co., 1897), 7-8

sugar planters had been somewhat ambivalent on the question of annexation, particularly after the United States passed legislation excluding immigrants from China, one of their primary sources of labor. But the recent McKinley tariff in 1890 had demonstrated Hawaii's dependence on favorable trade conditions with the United States, and the terms of the Reciprocity treaty stated that either party could abrogate the treaty at a year's notice (see ch. 1). For Hawaii's sugar planters, then, annexation meant establishing on a more permanent basis the conditions for successful plantation agriculture. Anticipating that annexation would cut off critical labor supplies, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association significantly increased its recruitment of Japanese workers. From 1895 to 1900, planters brought 64,284 Japanese to the islands, of whom 52,457 were adult males.[47]

These competing logics of development—one based on the settlement of white farmers, the other on a plantation system dominated by a white oligarchy—inflected debates over the U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i. In the United States, the population of Asians working and living in the islands generated strong opposition to annexation. As Congress considered President William McKinley's 1897 treaty of annexation, organizations like the Commercial Club of Chicago objected: "The population of which not exceeding 5 per cent are white and the remainder chiefly semi-savages and Orientals can never become assimilated with Americans nor be submissive to the rule of constitutional law."[48] Objections like these, along with powerful protests against annexation that included a petition signed by 21,269 Kānaka Maoli, swayed enough senators to defeat the annexation treaty. However, the imperative of advancing U.S. economic and security

[47] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 186.
[48] "Why Hawaii Should Not be Annexed," *The San Francisco Call*, January 30, 1898.

interests led to annexation not through treaty, but instead by means of a joint congressional resolution, which required only a simple majority in both houses of Congress.[49]

With the Newlands Resolution, the U.S. government acquired roughly 1.75 million acres of public lands in Hawai‘i, including the former Crown Lands.[50] The resolution made specific mention of Hawaii's public lands, declaring: "The existing laws of the United States relative to public lands shall not apply to such lands in the Hawaiian Islands; but the Congress of the United States shall enact special laws for their management and disposition."[51] The public land provisions in the Hawaiian Organic Act, which went into effect on June 14, 1900, maintained, in broad strokes, the policies outlined in the Republic's Land Act of 1895 with the same objective of encouraging white settlers to homestead by limiting the length of most leases to 21 years and requiring homesteaders to establish a residence on the land.[52] But most of Hawaii's best arable lands remained locked into long-term leases held by sugar plantations. Moreover, sugar's dominance over Hawaii's economic development left the infrastructure necessary to foster small farming operations underdeveloped. Insufficient roads and the lack of an established market for agricultural goods other than sugar discouraged the establishment of small farms, and because most food and supplies had to be shipped into Hawai‘i, prospective settlers faced a far higher cost of living in the islands than on the mainland.[53]

Despite these challenges, fears of a growing population of Asian migrants who had settled permanently in the islands pushed government officials in Hawai‘i to step up their efforts to bring in more white settlers during the early territorial period. As Dole opined in 1907, the

[49] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 160.
[50] Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 213.
[51] "Annexation of the Hawaiian Islands," quoted from Charles W. Eliot, *American Historical Documents, 1000-1904* vol. XLIII (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909-14), www.bartleby.com/43/ (accessed February 26, 2019).
[52] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1901, 8-9.
[53] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1903, 29.

small number of the "Anglo-Saxon race" in Hawai'i as compared to Japanese and Chinese immigrants signaled an uncertain political future. Although Asian immigrants were not eligible to naturalize or vote in Hawai'i, he observed, "Japanese and Chinese children, as well as those of other races, are becoming a large element in the schools of the Territory." He continued, "The majority of them have been born here, and therefore the boys on coming of age will be entitled to the franchise."[54] As was the case in California, the changing gender dynamics of the Japanese community in Hawai'i further complicated the issue of Japanese settlement in Hawai'i. Specifically, the birth of a generation of U.S.-born Japanese American citizens heralded a transformation of the political dynamics of the islands, giving an impending non-white majority greater agency. A. Gartley, president of the Builders' and Trades Exchange of Honolulu commented in 1903: "Without a substantial increase in white immigration the Hawaiian-born Oriental may produce serious complications in the control of affairs, and the embarrassing situation of having American institutions, instituted by Americans, placed in the hands of Orientals may occur."[55] New legislation designed to limit Japanese immigration had the ironic effect of intensifying this demographic shift. In 1907, the United States entered into an agreement with Japan to restrict the emigration of Japanese laborers into the United States, under the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement. No longer able to move freely between Hawai'i and Japan, Japanese laborers instead increasingly brought wives to them, establishing families and having children who would be U.S. citizens. As Governor Walter F. Frear observed of the Gentleman's Agreement: "this very understanding has indirectly been an important factor in bring about a marked increase in the arrival of Japanese women, which in turn has resulted in a decided increase in the number of Japanese births. This is a matter of the greatest importance,

[54] Dole, "Land Settlement in Hawaii," *Independent,* May 2, 1907.
[55] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1903, 45.

because the native-born Japanese, at least most of them, are American citizens, many of whom may eventually become voters."[56]

The changing racial demographics added urgency to the planters' efforts to introduce an alternative labor force. Dole believed that with the proper encouragement from the territorial government, the class of independent farmers would increase, causing the challenging conditions of finding markets and expensive transportation to improve. In pursuit of this objective, in 1903 the Hawaiian legislature attempted to stimulate diversified agricultural production by exempting property used to produce a number of goods from taxation, including sisal, castor oil, vanilla, poi, pineapple, and cassava.[57] The territorial government also encouraged white settlement through mechanisms established in the existing legislation, including underutilized provisions for establishing settlement associations and other forms of cooperative farming. The Federal Agricultural Experiment Station on Oahu established the Farmers' Institute of Hawaii to "encourage and help diversified agriculture in this Territory and the founding of permanent homes throughout the country."[58] They also encouraged studies on profitable farming and advertised Hawai'i to prospective settlers on the mainland. Among the first members were Sanford Dole, his cousin James Dole (who later dominated pineapple-growing on the islands), and prominent sugar planters. In the first annual report of the Farmers' Institute, Dole expounded on the gravity of the organization's work:

> I need hardly remind you of the extent to which our political future depends upon the growth of a farming class in these islands, living on and making their living from their farms. If we fail in this, and the agricultural work in the Territory shall be confined to large estates cultivated by a floating element of cheap laborers having no interest in the

[56] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1912, 44.
[57] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1903, 34-35.
[58] *First Annual Report of the Proceedings of the Farmers' Institute of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Farmers' Institute, 1903), 3.

> soil, the prospect of building up a citizen population of a conservative and intelligent character will be poor indeed.[59]

In Hawai‘i, the contradictions of U.S. imperial expansion were brought into sharp relief, as the very labor practices that had made Hawai‘i profitable and desirable undermined the political objectives of Hawaiian planters and politicians.

Facing growing pressure from politicians on the mainland who wished to break up massive landholdings, Hawaii's sugar planters began experimenting with different labor arrangements on their plantations. In 1898, the Ewa Plantation Company on Oahu brought fifteen white families of "highly respectable people" who were "carefully selected in the Western States" to work on the plantation in a cooperative, profit-sharing system. The plantation paid the transportation costs and provided each family with a home, a garden, and a large patch of common land to pasture livestock for their personal use. In exchange, the families were to cultivate sugarcane, which the plantation assigned to the families in lots. But despite extensive assistance from the Ewa Plantation Company in plowing and preparing the field, the company reported that the families were unable to perform the labor of cane cultivation and began drifting away. Within a year, all of the families had left the plantation and the Ewa Plantation Company abandoned the experiment. In his 1904 report to the Secretary of the Interior, territorial governor George Carter reported that since annexation, similar efforts to establish white families on plantation homesteads had also failed.[60]

One cooperative farming organization, the Wahiawa Settlement on Oahu, stood apart from these failed experiments, suggesting a possible alternative to the path of development

[59] *First Annual Report of the Proceedings of the Farmers' Institute of Hawaii*, 7.
[60] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1904, 10-11; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Labor Problems in Hawaii: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*, 67th Cong., 1st sess., 1921, H. J. Res. 158 and 171, 539.

determined by sugar production. The "colony" at Wahiawa was organized as a settlement association, an organization in which six or more individuals could apply for landholdings together in a single locality without competition from potential buyers with greater capital resources. First provided for in the Land Act of 1895, settlement associations were meant to facilitate the settlement of "qualified persons" (defined as American citizens and white immigrants) of limited means by allowing farmers to pool their energy and resources to establish successful agricultural ventures.[61] Sanford Dole, who first signed the 1895 Land Act into law, imagined the settlement association as "particularly convenient and even necessary as a scheme of inducing immigration from the mainland, because otherwise the absent applicants for land would have no guarantee of performance, but would be in disadvantageous competition with persons resident in the Islands."[62] Byron O. Clark, a founding member of the Farmers' Institute who had arrived in Hawai'i from the West Coast in 1897, organized a group of fellow Californians to establish a settlement association on 1,300 acres of government land at Wahiawa. Clark and the other members of the association began experimenting with different crops, and soon landed on pineapple as having the greatest market potential for the small-scale, independent family farmer.[63]

The Wahiawa colonists' first crop of pineapples, harvested in the summer of 1902, promised rapid returns for investors of small means. In addition to support from the territorial government, technological improvements in canning enabled producers to sell a higher quality

[61] For the purpose of settlement associations, the Land Act of 1895 and subsequent land laws defined "qualified person" as "a citizen by birth of naturalization of the United States, or who has received a certificate of declaration of intention to become a citizen." Because U.S. naturalization law extend only to whites and persons of African descent, settlement associations and other leasing options excluded Hawaii's large population of Asian immigrants. *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1904, 40; *Farmers' Institute of Hawaii*, 7.
[62] Dole, "Land Settlement in Hawaii," 1021.
[63] Richard A. Hawkins, *A Pacific Industry: The History of Pineapple Canning in Hawaii* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2011), 16-17.

product to consumers on the mainland.[64] But almost immediately, the Wahiawa colonists began to stray from the family farming model that had initiated the enterprise, organizing corporations and shifting to a plantation labor model that relied on Asian workers for manual labor. James Dole, Sanford Dole's cousin, led the corporatization of pineapple production in Hawai'i after he acquired a tract of land in the Wahiawa settlement from one of the original colonists in 1900 and founded the Hawaiian Pineapple Company to construct a cannery. Pineapple production at Wahiawa boomed with the expansion of canning operations and the growing interest in canned foods on the mainland market.[65]

The success of the Wahiawa settlement, in contrast to the failure of the Ewa experiment and other cooperative farming arrangements, reaffirmed plantation agriculture as the dominant mode of production in Hawai'i. Although the Wahiawa settlement was founded under provisions designed to promote family farming, Wahiawa's success as an agricultural enterprise was made possible by the adoption of plantation production methods and corporate organization. In the absence of a banking infrastructure to lend money, plantation companies were far more successful at raising capital and attracting investors. Large plantations worked by Asian laborers—most of whom had initially come to Hawai'i to work on sugar plantations—yielded far greater profits.[66] After Dole's term ended in 1903, subsequent governors of Hawai'i were more willing to accept that the territory's future was bound up with the production of sugar on large plantations. George Carter, who succeeded Dole as governor, had a decidedly more favorable view of large plantations, reporting in 1904 that their investments in infrastructure has been

[64] Because pineapples do not continue to sweeten after being harvested, unripe pineapples picked for the long overseas voyage to the mainland market were not sweet when they reached consumers. Canning technology allowed producers to delay harvesting until pineapples reached their peak, at which point they were preserved in cans. Hawkins, *A Pacific Industry*, 6.
[65] Hawkins, *A Pacific Industry*, 16-26.
[66] Hawkins, *A Pacific Industry*, 115-116.

essential to Hawaiian development. Noting the failure of the Ewa experiment, Carter argued for a relaxation of U.S. immigration restrictions prohibiting the immigration of workers from China, stating: "If development by homesteads only had been possible the lands which are now cane fields would be in their primitive condition, because their irrigation was only rendered possible by the investment of a large amount of capital."[67] Sugar so dominated the landscape by the time the of annexation that white settlement based on the model of the small-scale farmer simply could not replace the well established migrant labor regime. To the contrary, as Wahiawa showed, homesteading provisions could, in some cases, grow the demand for migrant laborers. By establishing new provisions for distributing Hawaii's public lands, the formation of the white settler produced the Asian migrant laborer.

The failure of Ewa and other similar arrangements was often attributed to the "inability" of white people to perform tropical field work. The territory's "need" for Asian labor was a common refrain in the annual reports of the Governor of Hawaii to the Secretary of the Interior in the decade following the Organic Act, as in the following argument found in the governor's report of 1903:

> The fact remains that the Oriental alien is and must be an overwhelming economic factor in this territory. Practically no substitute has been found for his labor and the one industry upon which the Territory depends. There is no competition from citizen labor for the Oriental in field work on the plantations. No other adequate industry has been found to which citizen labor can turn.[68]

Responding to mainland criticism of the large numbers of Chinese and Japanese laborers on Hawaii's plantations, Carter reasoned that if plantation labor could be secured for Hawai'i, it meant millions spent on machinery, tools, and other American manufactures. On the necessity of importing large numbers of Asian workers, he made the oft-repeated assertion that whites were

[67] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1904, 11.
[68] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1903, 45.

not suited to plantation work, reporting that there were no white men laboring in the cane fields of Hawai‘i: “Those who have tried it have never stayed by it for any length of time, and abundant evidence is forthcoming that the white man can not and will not stand the work of tropical cane fields.”[69] Asian labor was at once indispensable to the economic life of the territory and an existential threat. But as sugar production continued to grow in the first decade after annexation, mainland pressures against Asian immigration grew more heated, forcing Hawaii’s sugar planters to seek alternative sources of labor.

Potential Americans: the *Suveric* Portuguese and the Anti-Japanese Movement

Annexation enfolded Hawai‘i into the racial politics of the United States, closing the door to workers first from China and later Japan. The anti-Asian movement, centered in the West Coast, had been percolating since the mid-nineteenth century, when the California gold rush brought the first wave of Chinese immigrants. Early on, white workers’ resentment toward the Chinese was bound up with the free labor ideal that western expansion would open lands to white settlement, enabling white wage workers to earn their way to land-owning independence.[70] Instead, white people who had hoped to establish landholdings in California found much of the territory preempted by highly capitalized enterprises and well connected individuals.[71] White labor organizations like the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor blamed Chinese workers for depressing wages and lobbied Congress for their exclusion while mobs of white workers violently attacked Chinese communities up and down the West Coast. When Japanese immigration increased after passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, white

[69] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1904, 10.
[70] Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, xv.
[71] David Igler, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 41.

workers directed similar legal efforts and acts of violence toward these new arrivals, staging anti-Japanese riots in San Francisco in 1907.[72] In May 1905, California labor leaders formed the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League (later renamed the Asiatic Exclusion League to reflect its broader purpose) to demand that Japanese and other Asians be subject to the same exclusion as the Chinese. The League recruited from civic, fraternal and labor organizations, and by December 1907 it reported 225 affiliated organizations in California alone, plus branch "leagues" across western cities including Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, and Denver, among others.[73]

The growing anti-Japanese sentiment in national politics coalesced with a growing visibility and assertiveness of Japanese laborers on both the mainland and in Hawai‘i. In 1903, Japanese and Mexican farmworkers brought sugar beet harvesting in the town of Oxnard, California, to a standstill when they walked off the job to protest wages and labor contracting practices. The strike forced Oxnard's sugar beet farmers to concede to the workers' demands, which included hiring directly from Japanese labor contractors.[74] In Hawai‘i, after the Organic Act ended penal contract labor in 1900, Japanese workers organized to demand better wages and working conditions through collective action. In a series of strikes that culminated in a massive four-month strike involving over 7,000 Japanese workers on all major Oahu plantations in 1909, Japanese workers increasingly used their numerical significance and increased organization to shift the balance of power on plantations. Annexation had also opened up migration to the U.S. mainland, and thousands of Japanese left oppressive plantation conditions to seek better alternatives on the West Coast.[75]

[72] Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 89-96.
[73] *Proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League* (December 1907): 3-4.
[74] Almaguer, "Racial Domination and Class Conflict in Capitalist Agriculture": 325-350.
[75] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 37, 42-45.

Japanese worker strikes, together with the growing anti-Japanese sentiment on the mainland, created pressure for Hawaii's planters to find an alternative labor source. This pressure increased in 1907 with the Gentleman's Agreement. Their primary concern was to maintain a large, easily controlled labor force. To this end, sugar planters organized under the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association acted cooperatively to set wage standards and recruit labor across the islands to avoid competing for laborers. In previous decades they sought to control workers by maintaining an ethnically stratified and divided labor force, but the increasingly restrictive immigration laws of the United States meant that plantations had to take workers where they could find them. With the new restrictions in place, Hawaii's sugar planters, who had earlier resisted establishing white families on their plantations, grew more willing to open sugarcane lands to white settlement, but they did so in ways that perpetuated the plantations' control over the land. As a result, efforts to import "potential Americans" failed to disrupt sugar's dominance or the racialized labor regime on which that dominance was built.[76]

The Suveric Portuguese

On December 1, 1906, the British steamship *Suveric* landed in Honolulu Harbor carrying 459 working men and their families from the Portuguese islands of Madeira and the Azores. Numbering 1,324 persons in all, they were met by a contingent of immigration officials and HSPA agents. The southern European islands had been an important source of laborers in the 1880s until the government established under the Bayonet Constitution in 1887 ceased active recruitment. With the establishment of U.S. law in the islands, Hawai‘i was subject to the Foran Act (1885), which prohibited the importation of foreign contract workers. As a result, the HSPA

[76] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 59.

was no longer able to recruit foreign laborers to work in Hawai‘i, as they had prior to annexation. States and territories could, however, offer inducements to encourage immigration of potential citizens. In 1905 the territorial government established a new bureau of immigration with the active support of sugar planters, “to promote a settlement of laboring classes in Hawaii, especially from the Azores, Mederia [sic] Islands, and from southern Europe,” providing the HSPA a way to circumvent restrictions on foreign labor recruitment.[77] From July 1905 to January 1907, the HSPA donated over $83,000 to the immigration bureau, which took a detailed assessment of the sugar planters’ labor needs and the inducements plantations were willing to offer to prospective immigrants. With this information and HSPA funding on hand, agents of the bureau departed for the Azores in May 1906. By October, they had secured a charter for the steamship *Suveric* and a full contingent of Portuguese workers and their families prepared to embark.[78]

The recruitment of the *Suveric* Portuguese was part of a broader effort by the HSPA, in cooperation with the territorial government, to encourage European immigration to Hawai‘i by offering homesteads and contracts to laborers from Portugal, Spain, Russia and elsewhere. In lieu of the standard Portuguese wage rate of $22 per month for standard day labor, qualified laborers were offered wages of $20 per month, plus a lot on which they could establish a home.[79] Some observers believed that a lack of such incentives was behind the inability of plantations to maintain a stable labor force of white workers in the first place. Speaking about the *Suveric* arrivals, Dole argued, “There is little doubt but that if such a plan had been adopted by the sugar

[77] *Labor Problems in Hawaii*, 540.
[78] *Labor Problems in Hawaii*, 539-540; *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1907, 49-55.
[79] Royal Mead to William Pullar, January 3, 1907, Laupahoehoe Sugar Company (LSC) 21/6: “HI. Planters’ Assn. Letters – 1900-1918,” Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association Plantation Archives, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library Hawaiian Collection (HSPA Records).

plantations at the time of the first introduction of Portuguese immigrants, twenty years ago, a much larger proportion would have been contented to remain and perform field work on the plantations than has been the case."[80] Dole and others incorrectly believed that providing homesteads would give Portuguese sufficient inducement to stay in Hawai'i as a permanent class of laborers.

Frank P. Sargent, the United States Commissioner-General of Immigration, hailed the arrival of the *Suveric* Portuguese as an "exceptionally fine lot of people," well suited to developing the territory of Hawai'i, as President Theodore Roosevelt had demanded, along "traditional American lines."[81] In his fifth annual address to Congress, Roosevelt had made a strong statement against the use of "coolie" labor in Hawai'i in response to planters' demands to relax Chinese exclusion laws for the islands. Instead, he insisted, the growth of the territory "must only take place by the admission of immigrants fit in the end to assume the duties and burdens of full American citizenship."[82] By invoking the "burdens" of full citizenship, Roosevelt reflected the prevailing racial formation, which could imagine Asian immigrants only as "coolies—inherently unfree laborers—constructed against European immigrants who were understood as potential citizens.[83] According to this formation, Japanese and Chinese immigrants were imagined to be not only incapable of acting as independent free laborers, but also a threat to free labor on American soil. Sargent put the Roosevelt Administration's position succinctly when he said: "These islands should be good for something besides raising cane and it is the President's desire to see the people of the middle class have a chance here, and I believe that

[80] Dole, "Land Settlement in Hawaii," 1020.
[81] *The Hawaiian Star*, December 6, 1906, 1; *Sunday Advertiser*, December 2, 1906, 1.
[82] Theodore Roosevelt, "Fifth Annual Message to Congress," December 5, 1905, Miller Center, University of Virginia, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-5-1905-fifth-annual-message (accessed February 19, 2019).
[83] Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

such people as these just arrived in the *Suveric* will go far toward making this country what it should be."[84]

However, Hawaii's sugar planters had no intention of establishing an independent class of farmers that could potentially undermine their claims to Hawaii's rich agricultural lands. Mindful of pressure from Washington, D.C. and the territorial government to settle the *Suveric* Portuguese on Hawaiian homesteads, the HSPA framed Roosevelt's mandate in a different light, stating in a circular to its members: "It is the desire of President Roosevelt, and the Commissioner of Immigration, that these people should be settled upon lands and form a permanent population of laborers."[85] Or, as Royal Mead, Assistant Secretary of the HSPA explained: "The original plans laid down for the present immigration of Europeans were based on the domiciling of such immigrants as might be induced to come, the idea being that by giving these people a home and a small area of land they would form a permanent laboring population."[86] Hawaii's sugar planters recast homesteading as a means to tie laborers to the land—and to the plantation system—as opposed to a first step toward free-holding independence.

The recruitment of the *Suveric* Portuguese and others from Southern and Eastern Europe stood apart from the territorial government's previous efforts to encourage white settlement in Hawai‘i. Whereas earlier experiments with white settlers like the Ewa homesteading program had focused on bringing American families to Hawai‘i, sugar planters increasingly looked to bring in *potential* citizens—individuals with the legal (and, in the minds of government officials, the moral and intellectual) capacity for citizenship: in other words, white people. But if

[84] *Hawaiian Star*, December 6, 1906, p. 1.
[85] Mead to Pullar, January 3, 1907, LSC 21/6, HSPA Records.
[86] Mead to Pullar, April 4, 1907, LSC 21/6, HSPA Records.

immigrants from Portugal or Russia were more acceptable to racist politicians than Asian immigrants, their whiteness remained contested. Even as he praised the immigration of Portuguese to Hawai‘i, Dole found the Portuguese alone insufficient for the proper settlement of Hawai‘i, arguing: “in order to develop a citizenship here that will be always improving in those characteristics which are recognized as the highest attributes of American citizenship, it is essential that the class referred to as Anglo-Saxon should be largely increased.”[87]

As workers accustomed to laboring in tropical conditions, yet hailing from Europe, the Portuguese furthermore seemed ideally suited to the planters’ dual purpose of securing sufficient labor for their plantations and appeasing racist anti-immigrant factions within the U.S. government and organized labor. Of the *Suveric* recruits, Dole wrote: “This enterprise will fulfill two objects, a supply of labor and a substantial addition to the Portuguese element of the population of the country, a class noted for thrift, economy and law-abiding tendencies, whose capacity for citizenship increases with each generation.”[88] But neither Hawaii’s sugar planters nor observers from the United States viewed the Portuguese as white. A decade before the arrival of the *Suveric* Portuguese, haole politicians like Dole and Lorrin Thurston frequently lumped the Portuguese in with other Europeans residing in Hawai‘i to inflate the number of people who could be considered white. The point was to project an image of the Republic of Hawai‘i as an Anglo-Saxon nation in support of their arguments to advance annexation to the United States.[89]

[87] Dole, “Land Settlement in Hawaii,” 1020.
[88] Dole, “Land Settlement in Hawaii,” 1019.
[89] In 1895, an argument over an appropriations bill in the U.S. Senate became a heated debate over annexation that turned on the racial makeup of Hawai‘i. Arguing against the measure on the grounds that it was a thinly veiled attempt to advance the annexation of Hawai‘i, Senator Richard Pettigrew of South Dakota spoke disparagingly of Hawaii’s many contract laborers, saying of the Portuguese that they were “a mixture of races—Portuguese and black and other races of Africa,” and placed them among the “lowest of all the population upon the [Hawaiian] islands except, perhaps…the natives themselves.” In Hawai‘i, haole politicians like Sanford Dole who advocated annexation to the United States shared Pettigrew’s objection that Portuguese were “unfit” for self-government, but made the pragmatic argument to promote annexation. The role of race in the annexation of Hawai‘i are discussed at length in Eric Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North

Despite these pragmatic measures, Portuguese were not considered white, and would not become white in the years to come, at least not in Hawai‘i. In its annual census of Hawai‘i, *Thrum's Hawaiian Almanac Annual* listed Portuguese as a separate racial category from "Spanish" and "Other Caucasians" in its population and labor statistics.[90] The ability to own land, however, whether realized or not, conferred upon the *Suveric* Portuguese the possibility for whiteness, an increasing "capacity" for citizenship.[91] Dole's assessment of the Portuguese suggested a sort of "probationary" whiteness, by which Portuguese in Hawai‘i were understood to be white only in relation to Asian laborers and their legal capacity to own land. This racial ambiguity enabled Hawaiian planters and their supporters in the territorial government to make overtures to U.S. racial restrictions without fundamentally altering the racial structures of Hawaii's plantation society.[92]

The efforts to recruit "potential" American citizens to Hawai‘i, like the earlier efforts to induce the settlement of Americans from the mainland, failed to end the dominance of plantations and plantation labor regimes. By April 1907, the HSPA reported an "exodus" of Portuguese leaving Hawai‘i for the West Coast, attracted there by wages "considerably higher" than they could make on Hawaii's plantations. Just four months after the arrival of the *Suveric* the HSPA and the Board of Immigration halted the recruitment of Portuguese and other Europeans to focus its efforts on retaining the Portuguese population already there through a combination of homestead arrangements and higher wages for plantation work.[93] This announcement followed another highly publicized settlement failure involving a community of

Carolina Press, 2004), 123, 140.
[90] *Thrum's* (1911): 19.
[91] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
[92] Jung, *Reworking Race*, 61-62.
[93] HSPA Circular re. "European Laborers Leaving for the Coast," April 4, 1907, LSC 21/6, HSPA Records.

Russians in 1905 who attempted to establish an agricultural settlement on Kauai. A group of Russians based in Los Angeles made arrangements with the government to secure 5,000 acres of land, much of it already under cultivation in sugarcane, for 130 families who had expressed their intent to become American citizens. In the end, only 65 families arrived in Hawai‘i and were unable to maintain the lands under cultivation.[94]

Potential settlers faced formidable obstacles establishing themselves in Hawai‘i, whether they did so in association with a plantation or independently. Among other problems, sugar, the dominant crop, required a greater outlay in capital than most settlers could afford. Even pineapple, which had been upheld as the small farmer's alternative to sugar, proved most profitable when produced under plantation conditions. There was also the matter of market to consider. Though homesteaders, in theory, had ownership control of lands homesteaded from the government, the structure of the market meant that options outside of sugarcane cultivation were very limited. Growing sugarcane rendered homesteaders dependent on the major sugar factors, who controlled the price of raw sugar, as the only outlet for their product. Far from creating a class of independent farmers, homesteading bound workers to the plantation system. European immigrants quickly recognized that homesteading would not make them independent farmers. As a result, most settlers recruited from Portugal and elsewhere in Europe turned down plantations' offers for homesteads in favor of higher wages, and eventually sought better opportunities available outside the plantations and on the mainland.[95]

[94] *LPSM* 36, no. 10 (March 10, 1906), 155; *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1906, 79.
[95] *Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1913, 55.

"Homesteading" in Hawai'i

Prior to 1921, "homesteading" in Hawai'i referred to a variety of landholding and cultivating relationships in Hawai'i, including the government-sanctioned settlement of public lands and private contracts between plantation owners and their employees who cultivated shares of land. On lands controlled by the Laupahoehoe Sugar Company, for example, 360 acres were set aside for homesteading in 1909, and another 950 acres were designated for this purpose in 1914 under the homesteading provisions of the Organic Act. Homesteaders signed a contract to cultivate cane, which they sold to the Laupahoehoe Sugar Company. The company also held a variety of contracts with "adherent" planters, ranging from simple long-term cultivation contracts with plantation employees on lands owned or leased by the plantation to agreements with planters who held their own leases. Plantations paid certain costs associated with cultivating the cane, but depending on the type of agreement and how much independence the cultivator desired, the operation of adherent agreements varied. Samuel Kawaiaea, for example, was a homesteader in the Laupahoehoe plantation. Though he held the homestead to his own plot of land, he maintained a cultivation contract with the Laupahoehoe Sugar Company on whom he depended to purchase his cane and provide him with credit and plantation resources. His letters to Robert A. Hutchison, the manager of the Laupahoehoe plantation from 1915-1944, reflect his thrift and efforts toward independence. He and his family performed as much of the labor as they could, but like most homesteaders, Kawaiaea required additional hired hands for labor-intensive cane cultivation. Although he leased his own land from the Hawaiian government, he was beholden to the plantation for making a living, as the only profitable land use of this land was in sugarcane. Not only was Kawaiaea dependent on the Laupahoehoe Sugar Company to purchase

his cane, he depended on the company for loans to pay his daughter's tuition at the Kohala Girls' School and to pay laborers.[96]

As U.S. immigration restrictions closed off critical sources of labor, plantations experimented with homesteading arrangements as a way to control labor costs and discourage labor organizing. By 1920, about half of Laupahoehoe's cane land was planted and harvested by homesteaders, while the company cultivated the other half.[97] Since a major strike of Japanese plantation workers on Oahu briefly brought sugar production to a halt in 1909, the HSPA had encouraged its members to shift some proportion of their production to a contract basis as a means of combating labor organization.[98] Homesteading arrangements served a similar purpose. Like Samuel Kawaiaea, most homesteaders were indebted to plantation companies, which were the only source of credit available to them. Bound by contract, they were forced to sell their cane at prices dictated by the mill companies, which were typically owned by the plantations. Additionally, homesteaders working on land that nominally belonged to them were less likely than wage-earning plantation laborers to organize against the plantation management, allowing plantations to extract the greatest amount of value from their labor. It was a far cry from the independence that homesteading and land ownership was supposed to bring. In 1919, the territorial government's sugar expert, A. Horner, spent six months surveying the conditions of homesteaders across the territory. In his investigations, several homesteaders complained that they were not paid enough to make a profit on their contracts. In many cases, he found that homesteaders received less for the cane they produced than regular plantation laborers. In his

[96] Samuel K. Kawaiaea to Robert Hutchison, January 2, 1923, LSC 6/6, "Homesteaders – 1919-1924," HSPA Records and others in series.
[97] A. Horner to John Waterhouse (President, HSPA), December 9, 1919, LSC 6/6, HSPA Records; Laupahoehoe to T. H. Davies & Co., October 4, 1923, LSC 6/4, HSPA Records.
[98] T. H. Davies & Co. to Geo. McCubbin, Kaiwiki Sugar Co., December 3, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.

extensive investigations of contracts between mills and homesteaders, he wrote, he found only one case in which "full cooperation and good feeling existed between the homesteaders and the mill."[99] Given these circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the Portuguese and other European migrants would opt for higher plantation wages over binding themselves in debt to a plantation.

HSPA and the Corporate Consolidation of Land

Despite the efforts to break up Hawaii's massive landholdings and encourage small farming, Hawaii's sugar plantations consolidated their holdings and expanded production in the years following annexation. During the first decade under U.S. government, the average plantation size grew from 2,462 acres in 1900 to 3,695 acres in 1910, while the total area dedicated to sugar production rose from 125,000 acres to 255,000 acres. The amount of sugar produced in Hawai'i during this period rose from 238,000 tons to over 400,000 tons.[100] Although the Organic Act restricted the sale of public lands to any individual or company to 1,000 acres, plantations devised various ways of circumventing the limit, such as leasing additional land from individuals or companies holding adjoining lands, some of which were created specifically for that purpose. Many so-called "homesteaders" with lands adjoining plantations appear to have been little more than landlords whom plantations paid to cultivate land as if they had leased it themselves.[101] At the same time, the various means by which prospective settlers could obtain

[99] Horner to Waterhouse, December 9, 1919, LSC 6/6 HSPA Records.
[100] Estimates vary, but all reports indicate a massive expansion of acreage dedicated to sugar production in the first decade after the institution of the Organic Act. J. A. Mollett, "Capital in Hawaiian Sugar: Its Formation and Relation to Labor and Output, 1870-1957," *Agricultural Economics Bulletin* 21 (June 1961): 28, 17; Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy*, 25; *The Hawaiian Annual*, 1900, 66.
[101] Theo. H. Davies & Co. to R. A. Hutchison, February 18, 1924, LSC 6/6, and others in series.

public lands under Hawaii's Organic Act—cash freeholds, right-of-purchase leases, and other arrangements such as settlement associations—were subject to sustained fraud and abuse by speculators who took up lands solely for the purpose of reselling.[102]

One of the mechanisms sugar plantations and other large corporate interests used to get around the acreage limitations of the Organic Act was the land exchange. The exchange of publicly owned land, including Crown Lands, for privately owned land had been a part of Hawaii's land policy since shortly after the Māhele instituted private land ownership on the islands. The primary purpose of exchanges was to obtain land for schools, roads, and other infrastructural development, and the number of exchanges grew after 1876 when the Reciprocity Treaty launched Hawai‘i into a period of rapid growth. Sugar plantations and other large agricultural corporations used exchanges to consolidate their scattered holdings, which did not necessarily constitute a violation of the system. Prior to annexation, the value of exchanged lands was generally equitable, but after the institution of the Organic Act, exchanges were increasingly used as a means of speculation and exploited as a loophole by agricultural enterprises to obtain title to valuable public lands in exchange for less useful lands.[103]

The most egregious abuse of the land exchange took place in 1907, when the government dispensed nearly 48,000 acres of government land, including over 17,000 acres of former Crown Lands on the island of Lanai in what was essentially a sale of public lands under the guise of exchange. Charles Gay, who had acquired roughly half the island in the sale of the failed Manalei Sugar Company engineered the exchange to give him ownership over nearly all the lands of the island, which were eventually developed into pineapple plantations. The Lanai land

[102] Board of Commissioners of Agriculture and Forestry, *The Hawaiian Forester and Agriculturist* 6 no. 1-12 (1909): 39.
[103] Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii: Land Exchanges*, Report No. 2 (Honolulu: Legislative Reference Bureau, 1964), 2-4, 13

exchange was a dramatic departure from the traditional use of land exchanges to secure land for specific public purposes and engendered a great deal of criticism. Critics of the exchange viewed it as a giveaway of valuable public lands that was contrary to the objective of homesteading. For Kānaka Maoli, the mass transfer of the public domain into private holdings further diminished their future claims in the ongoing process of dispossession. The land deal was challenged all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was ultimately upheld, though it gave way to legislative changes that effectively curbed land exchanges after 1910. By this point, however, plantation production defined the Hawaiian landscape.[104]

In 1908, territorial governor W. F. Frear appointed an Advisory Land Law Commission to investigate the uses and abuses of Hawaii's land laws, partially in response to the Lanai exchange. The commission reported widespread fraud in the distribution of public lands and made recommendations to Congress for amending the public land provisions of the Organic Act.[105] Amendments made to the Organic Act in 1910 were meant to encourage the settlement of "bona fide" settlers, not speculators, and restricted the use of land exchanges. But while the territorial government outwardly endorsed small settlements, it did little to actively encourage them, and plantations continued to expand and monopolize the best agricultural lands, making the prospect of independent farming, always a difficult undertaking, increasingly untenable.[106]

Hawaii's commissioner of labor observed in 1915 that there was almost no homesteading in Hawai‘i "in the sense understood by Americans." He continued, "Mainland and Hawaiian Island farmers do not take up land in Hawaii to fertilize it with the sweat of their brows; they take it up on speculation, hoping either to make it profitable with another person's labor or to sell

[104] Horwitz, et al., *Land Exchanges*, 14-18; Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands*, 179.
[105] *The Hawaiian Forester and Agriculturist*, 37-40.
[106] Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii*, 30-33.

it for more than it cost them."[107] The inability of Hawaii's territorial government to induce Americans or white immigrants to settle in Hawai‘i while control over the land remained concentrated in the hands of a small class of wealthy haoles ensured the persistence of a racially stratified labor force. Throughout this period, planters continued to rely on Japanese workers, though the new prohibition on Japanese immigration and the increasing labor militancy was a growing concern. However, the annexation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico offered a possible solution for sugar planters. In the meantime, the Big Five sugar agencies continued to consolidate their control over land as they solidified and expanded plantation labor practices.

Conclusion

Over the next decade, the only significant challenge to sugar planter hegemony came from Kānaka Maoli who promoted the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. But although the law was framed as a means of allotting and distributing lands to Native Hawaiians in need, the effect of the law was to delimit and minimize the claims Kānaka Maoli could make, opening more public lands to private exploitation in what some have called a "second Māhele," or the Hawaiian Dawes Act, for the vast dispossession it enabled. At the same time, the law amended the Organic Act to remove the 1,000-acre restriction on sales of public lands, making possible a still greater concentration of land in the hands of plantation companies.[108]

Having reaffirmed their control over lands, Hawaii's sugar planters turned to the question of labor, the other side of colonial commodity production. Claiming an acute labor shortage, which coincided with both the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and a massive strike of

[107] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Conditions in Hawaii: Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii for the year 1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 57.
[108] Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 74.

Japanese and Filipino workers on Oahu in 1920, the HSPA urged the territorial legislature to form an Emergency Labor Commission to push Congress for legislation that would create an exception to the Chinese Exclusion Act to bring in a large contingent of plantation workers. Though the effort was ultimately unsuccessful, it showed how far the territorial government had come from its earlier efforts to dismantle plantation production in Hawai‘i.[109] In the meantime, the HSPA devised new strategies of labor control that depended on an entirely new category of colonized labor from the Philippines.

With World War I, sugar prices soared and Hawaii's sugar planters experienced a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity, with soaring profits that continued through most of the 1920s. Toward the end of World War I, several of the long-term leases granted to sugar plantations during the reign of King Kalakaua (1874-1891) were set to expire, opening new possibilities for homesteading in Hawai‘i, and the territorial government engaged in renewed homesteading efforts under the new Governor Charles J. McCarthy (appointed 1918), beginning with lands leased by the Waiakea Mill Company. In March 1919 and again in February 1921, 216 lots totaling 7,261 acres were taken from the Waiakea acreage, most of it under cane cultivation, and turned into homestead lots. The government received more than 2,000 applications for the lots. Despite the initial enthusiasm for homesteading, however, very little assistance or instruction was provided to the new homesteaders, and the Waiakea homesteading project was a failure. In 1946, a historical survey of Hawaii's public land policies by Hawaii's Legislative Reference Bureau found that nearly ninety per cent of the Waiakea homestead lands had reverted to the Waiakea Mill company for the production of sugar. "The homesteader has retreated to the position of landlord," it stated. "His tenant is the plantation that cleared and

[109] John E. Reinecke, *Feigned Necessity: Hawaii's Attempt to Obtain Chinese Contract Labor, 1921-23* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1979).

developed the land originally." Those homesteaders who were unable to make payments lost legal title to their land; those who retained the land leased it to the plantations to grow the cane.[110]

The disposition of public lands under the Organic Act, intended to introduce a stable population of citizen farmers, instead generated new mobilities of labor through U.S. imperial circuits. The triumph of plantation development under American rule in the face of ongoing efforts to establish a more democratic distribution of land is not at all surprising if we consider that by the time the government attempted to institute white settlement on Hawai‘i, the best lands had been preempted by large capital interests. It was, in fact, the establishment of landed capital interests that had made possible U.S. expansion into Hawai‘i in the first place.

[110] Quoted in Horwitz, et al., *Public Land Policy in Hawaii*, 37.

Chapter Three

Colonizing Landscapes: Colonial Development and the Making of a Pacific Proletariat

Introduction

In 1909, agents of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) began recruiting laborers in the Philippine province of Cebu, an effort to maintain a steady supply of plantation labor in response to rising militancy among Japanese workers in Hawai‘i and increasingly restrictive U.S. immigration laws. Located in the center of the Visayan islands, Cebu quickly became one of the most important recruiting sites for Hawaii's sugar planters, drawing workers from the nearby islands of Bohol and Negros. The HSPA ran a regular advertisement in Cebuano newspapers that promised high wages, good housing, and free transportation back to the Philippines, beckoning Filipinos to "Come to the Hawaii Office and improve your living condition."[1]

The notion of migrating to Hawai‘i to improve one's situation in the Philippines appealed to a range of U.S. commercial interests in both the Philippines and Hawai‘i as well as U.S. colonial officials. Some supporters of the HSPA's efforts in the Philippines contended that migration to Hawai‘i would expose Filipinos to modern and efficient modes of production and instill in them the habits of industry that they would bring back with them to the Philippines. Others latched onto the idea that cash-strapped Filipinos could earn high wages that would enable them to return to the Philippines with enough capital to pursue land ownership, one of the objectives of U.S. imperial rule. But many Philippine elites, particularly those with landed interests in the Visayas, were critical of migration to Hawai‘i, arguing that Filipino migrants

[1] Resil B. Mojares, "Cebuano Perceptions of the Hawaii Migration, 1909-1934," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 11, no. 2/3 (June 1983): 81.

should instead go to Mindanao to develop the natural resources of the Philippines. Beginning in 1907, Filipinos in government proposed the colonization of Mindanao as a way to alleviate overcrowding in more populous territories and to modernize and amalgamate the non-Christian population within the Philippine nation. Although their objectives were at odds with one another, varying elite circles in the Philippines—those who supported Hawaiian labor recruitment and those who promoted the colonization of Mindanao—saw migration as a means of rationalizing population distribution to improve agricultural production and, ultimately, "uplift" the population by imposing a new labor discipline.

The transformation of the Philippine economy and society around the production of sugar unfolded through imperial conquest and state violence. This process spanned both the Spanish and U.S. colonial regimes, beginning with the development of export agriculture. But whereas Spanish colonialism in the Philippines was characterized by a type of pastoral discipline based on the close surveillance of individuals and communities, the United States ruled by deferring Philippine independence indefinitely until such a time that the United States deemed Filipinos capable of self-government, a strategy of rule that induced individual Filipinos to govern their own behaviors to demonstrate their "fitness" for self-rule.[2] While the most striking examples of U.S. conquest involved a devastating race war and the imprisonment of Filipinos in overcrowded concentration camps, the lasting violence of U.S. imperial rule took the shape of mundane bureaucratic processes like land registration and education reform. In particular, the conversion of territories into "public lands" rendered illegitimate longstanding forms of labor and social

[2] Beginning in the late-16th century, Spanish conquest in the Philippines established a new administrative order through a long process of reducción, which coerced scattered populations to resettle in towns. Concentrating Filipinos "bajo de la campana" (literally, under the church bells), enabled the friars to supervise and govern the population. Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, second ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 53.

reproduction, alienating lands from the people who lived and subsisted on them and refiguring those individuals as "squatters" on public lands. Through dispossession and displacement, colonial development around the production of export commodities remade Filipino subjects under the guise of free labor principles. Ostensibly, the U.S. imperial project of modernization would "free" ordinary Filipinos from their dependence on caciques, elites with whom they maintained a semi-feudal relationship.[3] In principle, public lands legislation in the Philippines under U.S. rule held forth the possibility of land ownership for ordinary Filipinos, however unlikely the realization of land ownership was for the vast majority of the population. When their half-hearted efforts failed to establish widespread property ownership, the colonial administration ascribed it to the "stagnation" of the Filipino race after three centuries of Spanish rule to legitimize the U.S. imperial project of "benevolent assimilation."

This chapter traces the racialization of migrant workers through the practices of U.S. imperial expansion. Focusing on the transformation of multiple-use lands that fulfilled most of their inhabitants material needs into massive mono-crop haciendas that produced sugar for export, it explores how public lands legislation, together with colonial education and new vagrancy laws, remade Filipinos into liberal subjects who could supposedly choose to move off the land to meet the demands of sugar production within and beyond the Philippines. Among other things, instituting land distribution and a new system of private property was supposed to free the masses of Filipinos of their social obligations to caciques. Efforts to remake Filipinos into "free labor" through the distribution of public lands went hand in hand with colonial education efforts, which shifted from a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum to an increased

[3] Brian Fegan, "The Social History of a Central Luzon Barrio," in *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations,* Alfred W. McCoy and Ed C. de Jesus, eds. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), 98.

focus on industrial education over the period of U.S. rule. In conjunction with vagrancy laws that criminalized idleness and unemployment, industrial education sought to enact a new form of governmentality based on wage labor discipline and colonial commodity production.[4]

The imperative to reshape common Filipinos into modern liberal subjects justified U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines in twentieth century, but there was strong disagreement over how that development should take place. Empire building had always required large bodies of racialized labor, but increasingly strict immigration laws in the United States and a politically powerful agricultural bloc closed many of the sources of labor that Americans had turned to for the development of the U.S. West and in the Pacific. The introduction of a new imperial ideology of "benevolent assimilation" recast Filipinos as *potential* liberal subjects, objects of American tutelage. This formulation, suggestive of a broader moral imperative of the U.S. empire, distanced Filipino migrants from chattel slavery and involuntary "coolie" labor. The justification of "uplift" for the inclusion of Filipino migrants as labor, moreover, legitimized U.S. imperialism and racialized migrants who left the Philippines for the United States, ironically reinforcing their exclusion from the U.S. nation. Over time, the racialization of Filipinos enabled Americans to envision Filipinos as a migrant labor force that could be mobilized to meet the labor demands of the U.S. empire in Hawai'i, Alaska, California, and beyond.

By tracing the history of public lands legislation, this chapter shows how U.S. colonial administrators, Philippine elites, and business interests from outside the Philippines used these

[4] By governmentality, I am referring to the practices by which a population is governed, or what Michel Foucault called the "art of government," a complex exercise of power, characterized by: "population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument." More generally, Foucault characterizes this exercise of power as "the way in which one conducts other people's conduct," a form of social control, which defines a "strategic field of power relations" wherein subjects individual subjects govern themselves. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1977-78*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Picador, 2004), 108, 388-389; see also *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1978-1979*, ed. Senellart (New York: Picador, 2004).

laws to reorder social relations, a process by which common Filipinos were alienated from earlier forms of social reproduction and recast Filipino workers as a mobile labor force available to meet the demands of capital across the U.S. empire. By recasting Filipinos as "free labor," public land laws reconfigured their productive relationships to the land. These shifts in land and social organization, in turn, made possible the reproduction of imperial social relations predicated on expansion. As in Hawai'i, public lands legislation rationalized and reordered social relations according to the demands of capital and empire. And, as in Hawai'i and in California, efforts by the state to effect more equitable land redistribution schemes resulted in the monopolization of land by foreign capital and a Philippine elite. The capitalization of land and proletarianization of labor, under the guise of land distribution and paternalistic tutelage, produced the Philippine colony and eventually the Philippine nation-state, both of which fell under the aegis of the U.S. empire.

Land Use & Labor Discipline in the Philippines

When the United States invaded the Philippines in 1898, the sugar planters of the province of Negros Occidental responded by seeking American protection for the newly formed government of Negros. The Republic of Negros, also referred to as the Cantonal or Provisional Government of Negros, briefly governed the province between the surrender of Spanish forces in the region on November 6, 1898, and its annexation by the United States on April 30, 1901. As other provinces revived warfare against a new imperial power—the United States—the leadership of Negros Occidental hoisted the U.S. flag above the capital building in Bacolod on February 12, 1899, breaking with the revolutionary Malolos government based in Central Luzon. Having signaled their support for the new rulers, wealthy sugar hacenderos found themselves at

war, not with an imperial army, but with bands of rogue peasants, including millenarian religious organizations like the Pulajanes and Babaylanes and armed bandits known as tulisanes. During the revolt against Spain, these peasant organizations had set aside longstanding social antipathies to briefly unite with the Negros planter elite, but the planters' alliance with the United States put them on opposite sides of the renewed conflict a few months later. Thenceforth peasant movements directed much of their anti-colonial activity against sugar planters, looting and burning plantations and demanding a radical redistribution of lands. Characterized by proto-nationalism infused with a nascent class consciousness, these peasant movements became the leading expression of anti-American resistance in the Visayas.[5]

The revolutionary history of Negros Occidental is part of a longer history of colonial development beginning in the eighteenth century and extending through the U.S. period. The participation of Philippine elites in the U.S. imperial project of "benevolent assimilation" is best understood within a longer process of economic reorganization under colonialism that began under Spanish rule. These changes were particularly pronounced in sugar-growing regions, where the imperative to produce for international markets led to vast accumulations of capital and land, displacing many Filipinos from their earlier means of reproduction rooted in patron-client relations of mutual obligation and creating the conditions for social conflict. By the time the United States took control of the Republic of Negros, most of the province's arable lands had been carved into haciendas dedicated to the production of sugarcane, destroying subsistence production and rendering the entire region and its peoples dependent on the global market in

[5] For a concise history of the short-lived Republic of Negros and historiographical debates, Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., "The Republic of Negros," *Philippine Studies* 48, no. 1 (2000): 26-52. For a historical overview of the Republic of Negros, see Ma. Fe Hernaez Romero, *Negros Occidental: Between Two Foreign Powers (1888-1909)* (Manila: Negros Occidental Historical Commission, 1974); and Angel Martinez Cuesta, *History of Negros* (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1980).

sugar.[6] Governor Jose de Luzuriaga, explained in 1901: "The economic life of Occidental Negros is directed toward one end which is the motive of all financial movements; this is the cultivation of sugarcane."[7] Luzuriaga was himself a sugar planter, whose mestizo family had been among the first to rise to prominence with the transformation of the western Negros plains into massive sugar haciendas. In his role as provincial governor of Occidental Negros, and later in his position in the Philippine Commission on which he served for the entire existence of the governing body (1901-1913), he championed the interests of Philippine sugar planters and their financial supporters.[8]

Sugarcane had been cultivated and consumed in the Philippines long before the first Europeans arrived in Southeast Asia. However, the manufacture of sugar for commerce did not begin until the early seventeenth century when Spanish friars established the first sugar plantations and introduced Chinese sugar-making technologies to the archipelago.[9] Over the next two centuries, something akin to a sugar industry began to take shape in the Philippines, but it remained relatively insignificant outside the few centers of production in Central Luzon. During this period Spain was interested in the Philippines primarily as an entrepôt in the Manila Galleon trade, a jealously guarded government monopoly that dominated Philippine commerce until the nineteenth century. From 1572 to 1815, the galleons carried Mexican silver to Manila in

[6] Jonathan Fast and Jim Richardson provide a broad overview of the social transformations that resulted from the opening of the Philippines to world trade in Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency: Political and Economic Revolution in 19th Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1979). See also, Alfred W. McCoy and Ed. C. de Jesus, eds., *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1982).

[7] "Annual Report of the Governor of the Province of Occidental Negros, P. I., for the Year 1901," (1901), Bureau of Insular Affairs, Box 316, Record Group (RG) 350, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (NARA).

[8] Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., "Colonial Sugar Production in the Spanish Philippines: Calamba and Negros Compared," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2017): 242.

[9] John A. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 21.

exchange for Chinese goods. Facing growing pressure from rival European powers in the Pacific, especially the British, and diminishing revenues from the galleon trade in the late-eighteenth century, a series of reformist Spanish governors, beginning with José de Basco y Vargas in 1778, began opening the Philippines to international commerce. To replace lost revenues from the galleon trade that was by then in decline, Basco instituted a series of economic reforms that encouraged the development of export-oriented agriculture and manufactured goods, including sugar. However, the shift toward export-oriented agriculture began with tobacco, not sugar, through the institution of a government monopoly in 1782. The tobacco monopoly transformed the Philippines from a drain on Spanish coffers into a revenue-generating colony. It also provided cabezas de barangay—chiefs or leading Filipinos who served as middlemen between the Filipino masses and the Spanish—to amass wealth from the land and labor of common Filipinos, who were increasingly alienated from the land with the Spanish introduction of private property. The gradual opening of the Philippines to foreign capital from beyond the archipelago beginning in the late-eighteenth century transformed Philippine landscapes and restructured social relations around the production of export agriculture.[10]

Spain's expansion of Philippine trade coincided with technological developments in sugar production and the emergence of new and expanding markets for sugar in the Pacific and beyond. Over the next several decades, sugar production transformed landscapes across the archipelago, replacing subsistence crops like rice and sweet potato. But this development occurred unevenly across the Philippines. In the densely populated region of Pampanga,

[10] Benito J. Legarda, *After the Galleons: Foreign Trade, Economic Change & Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century Philippines* (Madison: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999); Ed. C. De Jesus, *The Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines: Bureaucratic Enterprise and Social Change, 1766-1880* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980); P. N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 75-77.

proximity to the port of Manila and the center of Spanish power enabled sugar production to take hold early.[11] By contrast, the remote region of Negros Occidental remained relatively unchanged until the 1840s. A long history of Moro raids and 250 years of Spanish indifference toward governing the province had left the coastal regions of Negros sparsely populated and without an entrenched indigenous elite to capitalize on Spain's reformist impulses. Its distance from any major ports further hindered the introduction of commercial agriculture. That setting began to change around 1840, when a French sugar expert named Yves Leopold Germain Gaston established an estate in Silay on the northwestern corner of the island. There, Gaston planted a large crop of sugarcane and constructed the first modern sugar mill in Negros. Thereafter sugar production expanded rapidly in the province, spurred by a recent wave of Spanish and mestizo settlers to the region. Over the next two decades, Negros Occidental had emerged as one of the major centers of commercialized agriculture in the Philippines.[12]

The development of the province was inseparable from the development of the sugar industry. Iloilo City on the neighboring island of Panay emerged as the region's major trading center, and the city's rapid commercial development after its port opened to the world market reflected the increasingly global character of Philippine trade. British and American trading firms including Russell and Sturgis, Smith, Bell and Company, and Kerr and Company set up offices in the Visayan province, providing the necessary capital to Philippine sugar hacenderos and acting as their intermediaries in the international sugar market. By the early nineteenth century, the planting and financing of sugarcane were dominated by Europeans, Americans, and

[11] "Rice," *Census of the Philippine Islands, taken under the direction of the Philippine Commission in the Year 1903, Vol. IV,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 86-87. Also, Theresa Marie Ventura, "American Empire, Agrarian Reform and the Problem of Tropical Nature in the Philippines, 1898-1916," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2009), 223-227.

[12] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 40-41; Alfred W. McCoy, "Baylan: Animist Religion and Philippine Peasant Ideology," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society* 10, no. 3 (September 1982): 166; Cuesta, *History of Negros*, 361-371.

Chinese mestizos. English and American trading firms played a critical role in financing and marketing Philippine agricultural production, channeling its development toward export-oriented monocrop agriculture. The focus on cash crops like sugar, which required large outlays of capital and an educated understanding of the global market, ensured that the commercial development of the Philippines would be dominated by non-indigenous planters and outside capital.[13] Sugar production also required a large number of workers for the labor-intensive processes of planting, harvesting, and milling the cane. Acquiring and maintaining a disciplined labor force was always a challenge for Negros sugar planters, who depended on the migration of laborers from other provinces in the Visayas, especially Iloilo. Some of these workers resided on the land as tenants (aparceros) while others migrated to Negros as seasonal laborers (sakadas) after the completion of Iloilo's annual rice harvest. The result of these economic patterns was a bifurcated social structure characterized by a concentration of wealth and land in the hands of Spanish and mestizo hacenderos.[14]

The vast cultural distance between hacenderos and the Philippine peasantry in Negros eroded the paternalistic social obligations based on Filipino conceptions of reciprocity that had maintained the social bonds between them for generations. Specifically, the concept of utang na loob, translatable to "debt of gratitude" or "debt of the inner self," underwrote the reciprocal obligations of indebtedness within Filipino social hierarchies. But when the debt of the inner self was externalized to govern other social contexts such as the tenant-landlord relationship, the

[13] Studies on the role of foreign entrepreneurs and financiers in establishing the Negros sugar industry include Romero, *Negros Occidental Between Two Foreign Powers*, 27-42; Demy P. Sonza, *Sugar is Sweet: The Story of Nicholas Loney* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1977); Cuesta, *History of Negros*, 367.
[14] For a comprehensive overview of the class structures that developed alongside sugar production in Negros Occidental, Filomeno V. Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); also David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 36-37; and Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine* Society, 76-80.

inequality of utang na loob took on political valences with subversive implications.[15] Although Spanish colonialism had transformed power relations across the archipelago, elite Filipinos had continued to derive legitimacy from their ability to provide various forms of assistance to Philippine peasants and protect them from abuse by religious and colonial authorities during most of the Spanish colonial period.[16] In Negros, the rapid population growth, the concentration of lands, and the prominent role of European and American financiers defied those social norms. But even in long-established population centers of Central Luzon, the growing emphasis on export agriculture led to a breakdown in reciprocal social obligations and the emergence of class antagonism. In place of social intimacy hacenderos increasingly maintained labor discipline through force. Provincial and municipal authorities, most of whom were themselves hacenderos, enacted policing measures designed to protect planter interests. Tenant laborers who tried to escape the system by running away could be jailed for indebtedness and returned to their plantations. Sakadas tended to be more difficult to control. Sakadas posed a still greater challenge to labor discipline; mobile by definition, many sakadas deserted plantations after receiving an advance on their pay, easily finding cover in neighboring plantations or the nearby mountains. As planters became increasingly dependent on the seasonal laborers with the

[15] Vicente Rafael describes Filipino reciprocity in terms of the inherent inequality built into debt transactions: "The hierarchy that is formed by indebtedness is based on the sensed incommensurability between the gift that is received and its return, particularly in the gift is unsolicited." The utang na loob toward one's mother for the gift of life serves as a model for understanding Filipino reciprocity, as it is assumed one could never repay this debt in full, but instead makes partial "payments" in the form of respect. In the context of landlord-tenant relations, reciprocity is based on the notion that tenants could never override the benefits bestowed upon them by the landlord, an exchange which materialized in the form of actual debt. Tenants rendered payment regularly, but were never expected to fully pay off their debts. Indeed, it was the inability to ever fully repay these obligations that maintained the social hierarchy. Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 128-129. See also, Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 14-27.

[16] Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 58.

expansion of sugar production in the 1870s, they repeatedly petitioned Spanish colonial authorities to pass laws against vagrancy in an effort to control the worker population.[17]

Desertion was one expression of peasant resistance to the social dislocation of commercial sugar production. Another was the organization of peasant movements in open rebellion against the new social order. In the nineteenth century, these movements often centered on folk cults and secret societies that organized peasants against a range of colonial offenses, including the exclusion of native Filipinos from the priesthood in the Catholic church and from the provincial and insular governments. Such movements sprang up across the archipelago throughout the Spanish and American periods, but particularly during periods of rapid economic change and social upheaval. In the western Visayas, peasant movements were often characterized by millenarian tendencies and led by charismatic leaders called babaylanes, indigenous "priests" endowed with supernatural powers, who attracted the following of peasant farmers and migrant laborers. Others were dismissed as brigands, or bands of outlaws known as tulisanes. In 1899, Dean Worcester described tulisanes as being mainly composed of criminals and fugitives, but noted that they also recruited from the "numerous class" of peasants who faced abuse from government officials and friars.[18] As the Philippine economy became increasingly rooted in trade and sugar production in the 1870s, babaylanes and tulisanes had attracted thousands of peasant adherents, not only disrupting planter operations, but also threatening the peace and stability in the provinces. Planters, whose interests aligned with those of the insular government, regularly

[17] Dean Conant Worcester wrote extensively of the labor conditions in the Philippines as he found them in his 1886 and 1890 scientific expeditions to the Philippines, particularly of the challenges sugar hacenderos faced in controlling the migrant labor force in *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1899), 260. See also, "Report of the Governor of the Province of Occidental Negros," July 15, 1906, *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1905*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), I:399. For an overview of planter efforts to assert control over their migrant labor force, see Cuesta, *History of Negros*, 414; and McCoy, "Baylan," 167.
[18] Worcester, *The Philippine Islands*, 269-271.

called upon the Spanish Guardia Civil to maintain order and discipline workers in the late nineteenth century, setting a precedent for sugar planters to look to the state to protect their interests against peasant uprisings.[19]

The emergence of the elite ilustrado ("enlightened") class of the Philippines, to which many of the sugar hacenderos belonged, was made possible by the opening of the Philippines to outside capital. As Philippine foreign trade expanded in the nineteenth century, Spaniards, Chinese mestizos, and the indigenous elite were positioned to take advantage of external sources of foreign capital formed a new cosmopolitan Filipino elite. The wealth generated by sugar and other commercial goods like tobacco and abaca created avenues of education for the children of elite Filipinos, many of whom were educated in Europe where they encountered Enlightenment principles of individual liberty, representative government, and secular authority. Upon returning to the Philippines, ilustrados chafed under the Spanish colonial system and began to agitate against longstanding oppressions like the cedula (head tax), a lack of representation in the Spanish Cortes (Spain's legislative assembly), and the prohibition against Filipino priests in the Catholic Church. Among the ilustrados were Marcelo H. del Pilar, Mariano Ponce, and the famous writer and physician José Rizal, central figures in the Propaganda Movement that demanded colonial reforms from Spain. This elite movement was critical to the articulation of a Filipino nation and influenced the formation of the revolutionary organization, the Katipunan.[20]

Because elite Filipinos, especially in Negros Occidental, held particular interests in the political economy, the revolution against Spain produced divergent campaigns.[21] Historian Ma.

[19] For scholarly discussions of the use of the Guardia Civil to suppress peasant uprisings, see McCoy, "Baylan," 167-170; Cuesta, *History of Negros*, 431-432; Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 77-84.
[20] Studies of the Propaganda movement, its causes, and its leading figures include, John N. Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895: The creators of a Filipino conscious, the makers of revolution* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1973; Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, "Reform and Revolution," part 2 of *History of the Filipino People*, fifth ed. (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1977).
[21] Precisely what role elites played in the Filipino revolution against Spain has long been a subject of debate among

Fe Hernaez Romero notes two distinct lines of resistance. Led by the ilustrados, the first was connected to the Aguinaldo-led revolution centered in Luzon. The second was composed of tulisanes, babaylanes, and other peasant-based organizations.[22] In Negros, elites' accommodation of the U.S. occupation enabled them to maintain their status within Negros Occidental and to call upon the U.S. forces to protect and even advance their material interests. Under U.S. governance, they leveraged their position as subjects of U.S. rule to demand free and open markets for their sugar, further cementing their elite status. But peasant resistance targeted both capitalist exploitation and colonial rule, and so it persisted beyond the nationalist revolution, into the first decade of U.S. rule.[23]

Unlike the sugar-planting elite of Negros, peasant organizations like the babaylanes stood to gain little, if anything, from cooperation with the United States. Indeed, one of the primary objectives of the U.S. occupation, the maintenance of peace and order, involved putting down agrarian uprisings and asserting labor discipline. A closer look at these rural movements underscores the class dimensions underlying peasant struggles against colonial authority in the late-nineteenth century and the role of capital in shaping elite responses. The best documented peasant revolt to grip the region was the babaylan movement led by Papa Isio. Born Dionisio

historians of the Philippines. Nationalist historians like Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino argued that Filipino nationhood was born of the common struggle of Filipinos against the forces of colonialism and that the Philippine Revolution was primarily a revolt of the masses, whose revolutionary consciousness had been shaped by centuries of colonial exploitation. An alternative view advanced by scholars like Glenn Anthony May and John Larkin holds that the vast cultural differences among the different regions of the Philippines precluded the development of a national consciousness among the masses, giving greater weight to the elite role in the revolution. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*; Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City: Tala Pub. Services, 1975); Glenn Anthony May, *A Past Recovered* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987); Larkin *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*.

[22] Romero, *Negros Occidental*, 163.

[23] As with the broader revolutionary history of the Philippines, the actions of the so-called Republic of Negros are a subject of debate paralleling the broader historiography of the Philippine Revolution, with some scholars marking the overtures to the United States as an act of elite betrayal and others arguing that the plea for protection was never intended as a forfeit of sovereignty. In *Roots of Dependency*, Fast and Richardson provide an interpretation of elite collaboration as an "Exemplar of Betrayal." Aguilar's detailed historiographical essay, "The Republic of Negros," presents collaboration as a calculated response to American occupation.

Sigobela sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, Sigobela was widely reported to have worked as a plantation laborer in the La Carlota sugar district of Negros, where he first came into contact with the broader babaylan movement that began in the 1870s. By 1895 the charismatic Sigobela, who adopted the religious moniker Papa ("Pope") Isio, had attracted a significant following of plantation laborers and impoverished farmers who took refuge from the authorities in the mountains and survived by raiding the wealthy sugar estates below. Long before Negros elites joined the revolutionary cause of Aguinaldo and their counterparts to the north, the Guardia Civil found themselves engaged in full-scale battles with Papa Isio and his peasant army, who met the Spanish forces with shouts of "Viva Rizal!" Though briefly allied with the planters when they joined the revolution in November 1898, Isio's movement quickly turned against the hacenderos when they allied with the United States three months later. Isio's insurgent message continued to resonate with poor farmers and plantation workers, and babaylan resistance continued well into the U.S. occupation.[24]

Although contemporary colonial powers tried to dismiss the movements as primitive peasant superstitions, they nonetheless recognized the anti-colonial, anti-capitalist critique they represented. The governor's annual report on Occidental Negros in 1901 stated:

> The society of babaylanes (believers in superstitious and idolatrous things) is a mixture of confused socialistic principles anarchistic instincts and an aberration of religious and fanatic ideas. They are a crazy and criminal sect, who at the same time pray to God and preach the distribution of wealth, and looting and murder. There have always been babaylanes in the southern part of the island of Negros under the Spanish rule and under the insurgent and provisional government…They are led by one Dionisio Papa (Papa Isio) who has attained some prestige among them. This Dionisio Papa has made use of the present circumstances, and has adopted certain anti-American ideas; he considers himself an instrument of divine vengeance and preaches war against the Americans—whom he never attacks—and against the peaceful inhabitants, for the reason that these are addicted to the former.[25]

[24] Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 121-123; McCoy, "Baylan," 173; Romero, *Negros Occidental*, 168-180.
[25] "Annual Report of the Governor of the Province of Occidental Negros, P. I., for the year 1901," undated, BIA,

Historians David R. Sturtevant and Alfred W. McCoy, among others, have shown how babaylanes invoked pre-Hispanic symbols and animist concepts to mobilize peasants against political and economic enemies alike. Isio infused the religious movement with a radical nationalism that rejected the presence of Spaniards and Americans in Negros, advocated the redistribution of lands among people of Visayan blood ("Filipinos of face and heart"[26]), and demanded the conversion of sugarcane cultivation be turned to rice production. When the planters betrayed the nationalist cause, the babaylanes attacked and burned plantations in all-out guerilla warfare.[27]

Though peaking in 1899, babaylan uprisings persisted until U.S. forces captured the aging Papa Isio in 1907. Until then, however, the U.S. military used the guerilla skirmishes as justification for suspending habeas corpus and establishing military supremacy over the civilian government. In a seemingly interminable military campaign against "Pulajanes and other outlaws" on the Visayan islands of Leyte and Samar, that dragged on through the fall and winter of 1906, Major General J. M. Lee reported:

> A large number of outlaws have been killed and wounded and a great many have been captured or arrested and turned over to the Civil authorities for disposition. But there are a number in scattered bands with some of the bad leaders who are still at large and in hiding in the dense jungles and in the mountains. The Military and Constabulary have cooperated in all the operations to suppress the troubles. It is believed that many of these outlaws have friends and sympathizers scattered among the people.[28]

Box 316, RG 350, NARA.

[26] In a comprehensive study of the Philippines published after his resignation from the Philippine Commission, Dean Worcester reported noted the existence of a "thinly veiled hostility between the *mestizo* class and the great dark mass of people." During his tenure in the government of the Philippines from 1900-1913, he wrote, "we heard much of *Filipinos de cara y corazon*," literally, Filipinos of face and heart, denoting the resentment of common Filipinos for mestizo elites. Worcester, *The Philippines Past and Present* (London: Mills & Boon, 1914), 2: 939.

[27] Romero, *Negros Occidental*, 168-184; McCoy, "Baylan," 171.

[28] Lee to to Governor-General James F. Smith, November 21, 1906, Box 39 Leonard Wood Papers (Wood Papers), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LC).

In June 1907, Major George Bell, Jr. reported that the Pulajan movement in Leyte had finally been suppressed. “Bitter” anti-American sentiment was still prevalent throughout the region after the particularly brutal military campaign in Leyte, in which the entire population was subjected to military force. Bell reported that most Filipinos in Leyte remained sympathetic to the peasant movement. He cautioned that “none of the causes which, many Pulajanes state, made them become Pulajanes have been remedied, so still exist, and if not corrected will, in my opinion, cause fresh outbreak against Municipal Corruption and Oppression that will again necessitate the use of the Army within a year.”[29] Within the same report, Colonel Frank A. Smith expressed concerns that a resurgence of Pulajanism would further delay the economic development of the province.[30] And so, as military authority gave way to civilian governance, President William McKinley established the Philippine Commission as the U.S.-led government of the Philippines, which set about addressing the conditions that had produced agrarian uprisings. Central to these efforts were land policies that further consolidated planter power and criminalized alternative forms of land use and social reproduction.

Legislating Mobility: Dual Policies of Pacification and Uplift

To address the conditions that produced Pulajanism and other peasant movements, the American civil government pursued a vigorous policy of land reform, meant to both “uplift” the Philippine populace through land ownership and subject resistant Filipinos to American rule. The U.S. military campaign to subdue Filipinos and assert American authority over the population was entwined with efforts to enact major land reform. In particular, U.S. civil authorities in the Philippines envisioned land reform as an integral component of U.S. pacification efforts.

[29] Major George Bell, Jr. to General Leonard Wood, June 17, 1907, Box 39, Wood Papers, LC.
[30] Colonel Fred A. Smith to the Adjutant General, June 21, 1907 Box 39, Wood Papers, LC.

Colonial administrators like Governor-General William Howard Taft believed that giving ordinary Filipinos a stake in peaceful government and land ownership would diminish their sympathies for nationalist agitators.[31] But the commodification of lands had the ironic effect of alienating the Philippine peasantry from the land, producing a mass of landless workers for the further development of plantation-style commercial agricultural production.

For U.S. colonial officials in the Philippines, "uplift" meant remediating what they understood as centuries of cultural and political stagnation under Spanish rule. Reporting on the conditions of the Philippines in 1900, amid U.S. efforts to pacify Filipinos, Jacob Gould Schurman, president of the Philippine Commission, justified the U.S. occupation and war against Filipino revolutionaries as a "great political boon to the people," whose lack of "training in self-government" left them vulnerable to further conquest, a condition that could only be addressed through the U.S. mission of "benevolent assimilation":

> Should our power by any fatality be withdrawn, the commission believe that the government of the Philippines would speedily lapse into anarchy, which would excuse, if it did not necessitate the intervention of other powers and the eventual division of the islands among them. Only through American occupation, therefore, is the idea of a free, self-governing, and united Philippine commonwealth at all conceivable.[32]

But precisely how the United States should proceed in the political education of the Philippines was a contentious matter, both within the colonial administration and in American national

[31] Theresa Ventura, "From Small Farms to Progressive Plantations: The Trajectory of Land Reform in the American Colonial Philippines, 1900-1916," *Agricultural History Society* 90, no. 4 (2016): 461-462.
[32] President William McKinley issued his proclamation of "Benevolent Assimilation on December 21, 1898, after the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War, but prior to the commencement of hostilities in the Philippine-American War in 1899. In his address, McKinley asserted that the United States had come as "friends" for the protection of the lives and property of Filipinos. President McKinley's proclamation Benevolent Assimilation served as the rationale for the various policies outlined by the first Philippine Commission in 1900. Quote from *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1900,* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 183; a discussion of McKinley's proclamation appears as a blueprint for the Philippine Commission's governance of the Philippines appears in Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Culture in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S Colonialism* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 46.

politics. Initially, administrators attempted major land reforms that would settle Filipinos on individual homesteads in pursuit of the dual objectives of pacification and development. From the beginning, however, some within the colonial government argued that the best course of development was not individual land ownership, but corporate development of the natural resources of the Philippines. At the same time, the political influence of white farmers in the United States and Hawai‘i worked to inhibit the movement of capital into the islands by imposing tariffs on Philippine goods. In response, American administrators invested a great deal of intellectual labor to combat anti-imperialists at home to justify the American mission in the Philippines. The result of these efforts was a vision of Philippine development based on extensive American investment and the education of Filipinos to meet the demands of an increasingly export-oriented economy. Figuring capitalist development as a cornerstone of modernity, remaking Filipinos into modern liberal subjects potentially capable of individual freedom and national independence meant reshaping their relationship to the land and enacting a new form of wage labor discipline.

As discussions of Philippine economic development unfolded, the American military campaign to pacify the Philippines rapidly degenerated into a brutal and protracted "race war" against Filipinos.[33] Facing heavily armed U.S. soldiers, Filipino fighters soon adopted guerrilla warfare. Living off of the land and receiving support and cover from villagers, Filipino guerrillas passed quickly across the countryside, while American brigades struggled through difficult and unfamiliar terrain among a populace that was uncooperative, if not outright hostile to their efforts, particularly in provinces like Batangas and Cavite in central Luzon, where much of the

[33] The description of the Philippine-American War as a race war comes from Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 87.

early revolutionary activity was concentrated. On the Visayan islands of Panay and Samar General Jacob H. Smith ordered his troops to kill all Filipinos capable of bearing arms: "Everything over ten."[34] Unable to distinguish guerillas from noncombatants, U.S. troops waged war against the entire population. Early in 1901 the U.S. military inaugurated a policy of "reconcentration" in an effort to get a handle on an elusive enemy. Under Major General J. Franklin Bell's orders, Filipinos living in combat zones were forced into heavily guarded concentration camps; those found outside were assumed to be hostile and were killed on sight. But while unsanctioned mobility was an offense that bore heavy consequences, complying with reconcentration was also devastating. Confined to small villages guarded by the U.S. military, rural Filipinos were unable to access the fields they worked for both subsistence and cash. Food shortages and cholera outbreaks were common. During a scorched-earth campaign in the province of Batangas in 1901, according to conservative estimates, more than 100,000 Filipinos died.[35]

Despite ongoing hostilities across the archipelago, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed victory over the Filipino forces on July 4, 1902. After the surrender of General Miguel Malvar, armed resistance to the U.S. occupation was said to be the work of ladrones, bands of thieves terrorizing the countryside. The Brigandage Act, passed into law on November 12, 1902, defined "highway robbers or brigands" as armed bands of three or more persons. Belonging to such an organization was defined as a crime, as was aiding or abetting any such

[34] Luzviminda Francisco, "The First Vietnam: The U.S.-Philippine War of 1899," *Critical Asian Studies* 5, no. 4 (December 1973): 8.

[35] Luzviminda Francisco derives this figure from an analysis of the Philippine census in, "The First Vietnam," 14; in another detailed analysis of demographic records, Glenn Anthony May puts the figure even higher, a 150,000-person decline during the military campaign in Batangas alone, in "150,000 Missing Filipinos: A Demographic Crisis in Batangas, 1887-1903," *Annales de Démographie Historique* no. 1 (January 1986): 215-243. Paul Kramer provides an overview of the Philippine-American War, including the policy of reconcentration and the devastating campaign in Batangas in *Blood of Government*, 29, 130-145.

bands. By dismissing the continued resistance to the U.S. occupation as the work of petty criminals, U.S. administrators attempted to deny the ongoing existence of a nationalist movement in the Philippines, to Filipino and American audiences. The Brigandage Act stripped such resistance of the revolutionary connotations it previously carried, subjecting revolutionaries to the power of the state.[36]

Efforts to counter revolutionary impulses among Filipinos operated hand in hand with the expansion of colonial commodity production. When it passed the Brigandage Act, the Philippine Commission simultaneously enacted a vagrancy law that criminalized any person with "no apparent means of subsistence, who has the physical ability to work" and "every person found loitering about saloons or dramshops or gambling houses or tramping or straying through the countryside without visible means of support." Titled "An Act defining vagrancy and providing for punishment therefor," Act 519 of the Philippine Commission made available the coercive and punitive powers of the state to limit the mobility of peasants in the name of preventing "ladronism," fulfilling a longstanding desire of sugar hacenderos never realized under Spanish authority. These police measures were designed not only to prevent seditious activity, but also to provide capital with a new means of disciplining labor. The vagrancy laws in the Philippines were similar to laws in the U.S. South after the Civil War. Vagrancy laws compelled former slaves to enter into labor contracts to sustain the Southern plantation economy in transition to free labor. In the Philippines, vagrancy laws were structured around the production of sugar.[37] By criminalizing Filipinos who lacked a means of support that was legible to the state, such as

[36] "An act defining highway robbery or brigandage, and providing for the punishment therefore," Public Law 518, *Annual Reports of the War Department* (1903), 3: 215; see also Kramer, *Blood of Government*, 254.
[37] Sarah Haley describes the emergence of a carceral state after the abolition of slavery, which provided the labor resources necessary for economic development in the South by criminalizing Black women. Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 11-12. See also, Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98-137.

land ownership or wage labor, the colonial government ensured an adequate labor supply for labor-intensive export agriculture.[38]

Despite repeated proclamations of U.S. victory in the Philippines and the creation of a civilian police force to maintain order in the population, nationalist uprisings continued. Reconcentration became an official policy of the civilian government. On June 1, 1903 the Philippine Commission passed an act that empowered provincial governors in areas "infested" with "ladrones" or other "outlaws" to order the residents of outlying barrios into concentrated population centers. Framed as an effort to eradicate ladronism and protect the "lives and property of residents in the outlying barrios," civilian reconcentration was indistinguishable from the earlier military tactic.[39] In a monthly report in 1903, Governor A. M. Betts of Albay, a province in the Bicol region of the Philippines, reported poverty and widespread starvation in the concentration camps. The reconcentration of the population, he reported, had prevented the cultivation of "a great many thousand acres more of rice," further exacerbating the food shortage across the province. The provincial government had already exhausted all of the funds it could spare to employ the most needy, but the incarceration of the populace was deemed a necessity until the "lawless element" that "infested" the province was exterminated.[40]

While concentration camps continued as part of the American campaign to pacify the countryside, there were simultaneous efforts to settle the Philippine population on private homesteads. When the United States assumed control of the Philippines in 1898, it acquired over

[38] "An act defining vagrancy and providing for punishment therefore," Public Law 519, *Annual Reports of the War Department* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903) 3: 215.
[39] An act amending act numbered one hundred and seventy-five, entitled "An act providing for the organization of an insular constabulary and for the inspection of the municipal police," and acts numbered six hundred and ten, six hundred and eighteen, and six hundred and nineteen amendatory thereof, Public Law 781, Section 6, *Public Laws and Resolutions Passed by the Philippine Commission* 12 (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1903), 4-5.
[40] A. M. Betts, "Monthly Report of the Civil Governor of the Province of Albay," June 24, 1903, #3022-22, BIA, Box 315, RG 350, NARA. See also various other reports in series #3006-46-3028.

68 million acres of public land from the Spanish government. According to the reports of the Second Philippine Commission led by William Howard Taft, which served as the U.S. governing body in the Philippines from 1901: "There was a very great demand for this land, but owing to the irregularities, frauds, and delays in the Spanish system, the natives generally abandoned efforts to secure a good title and contented themselves with remaining on the land as simple squatters, subject to eviction by the State."[41] Administrators blamed the "insufficient character" of the public land system inherited from the Spanish for the lack of capital investment, which inhibited economic growth in the Philippines. In its early reports, the Philippine Commission emphasized the importance of registering land titles to facilitate the economic development of the islands, noting in 1902: "The enactment of such legislation here is of the highest importance." He continued, "Titles and boundaries at present are so uncertain that capital is deterred from investment by reason thereof, important enterprises that otherwise would be undertaken are not entered upon, and rates of interest for loans upon real estate are exceedingly high." The complaint was repeated in reports of the Philippine Commission, the Philippine Census, and in the correspondence of colonial administrators like Dean Worcester and Taft who prioritized attracting capital to the islands.[42]

In the Philippine Organic Act of 1902, Congress tasked the Philippine Commission with administering these public lands for the benefit of Filipinos, prescribing the terms by which public lands could be leased, sold, and otherwise claimed by individuals and corporations, with an emphasis on effecting titles and issuing patents to land owners.[43] Upon establishing civil

[41] *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1900), 33.
[42] *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1902), 697.
[43] "Public Lands," *Census of the Philippine Islands, Taken under the Direction of the Philippine Legislature in the Year 1918*, Vol. III, (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1921), 873; "Registration of Land Titles," *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1901), 91-92.

government in the islands, the Philippine Commission found the condition of land titles inherited from Spain to be in a state of disarray and cited many instances of fraud. To address the issue of land titles, the Philippine Commission instituted the Land Registration Act in 1903, which established the Torrens system of land registration and a Court of Land Registration in which ownership of land could be confirmed or disputed. The Torrens system of land registration, devised by an Australian named Robert Torrens, is a system of land registration and land transfer in which the government surveys current landholdings and maintains a registry documenting land titles. In addition to providing clear evidence of land ownership, the system was meant to streamline the process by which land could be transferred. But the Torrens system required application fees, government surveys, and official registrations that made the costs were prohibitively high for the majority of Filipinos with small landholdings. Instead of expanding the base of a propertied citizenry, the formalization of land claims through registration rendered invalid the ancestral or customary land use claims of Filipinos.[44]

Under the authority granted by Congress through the Philippine Organic Act, the Philippine Commission enacted Public Law 926, also referred to as the Public Lands Act, on October 7, 1903. Among other things, the Public Lands Act introduced a system of homesteading to the Philippines. Modeled on the U.S. version of western settlement, homesteading in the Philippines was intended to transform landless peasants accustomed to depending on caciques into self-sufficient, free-holding farmers, as part of the overall American project of racial and economic uplift. Long after the United States had dissolved its commitment

[44] General Land Registration Office, Philippine Department of Finance and Justice, "The Torrens System of Registration in the Philippine Islands," June 25, 1915. #1768-38, BIA, Box 325, RG 350, NARA; for a detailed analysis of U.S. land reform efforts, see Theresa Ventura, "From Small Farms to Progressive Plantations: The Trajectory of Land Reform in the American Colonial Philippines, 1900-1916," *Agricultural History* 90, no. 4 (October 2016): 459-483.

to promoting widespread land ownership, many Americans still believed it was the ideal form of land settlement for making the Philippines into a modern nation. "This form of development is slow," remarked one administrator in 1929. He continued, "It is, however, the kind that depicts the pioneer spirit and which, if encouraged, will put backbone into the future of the Philippine Islands. It is the very kind of development that played the leading role in the building of the wealthiest nation in the world—the United States."[45]

On top of the cultural and structural obstacles to formal land ownership, homesteading efforts were beset with problems from the beginning. A combination of factors, including insufficient credit, a lack of livestock and tools, prohibitive surveying costs, understaffing of the Philippine Lands Bureau, and an unwillingness of the Lands Bureau to survey small homestead claims meant that few Filipinos applied for homesteads. And only a fraction of those who applied ever received patents to the land.[46] The 1903 Census of the Philippine Islands found that the average area of cultivated land for individual farms was 1.59 hectares, well below the 40-acre limit established by Philippine homesteading law.[47] The long cumbersome process of filing a land registration claim further hindered progress of the Philippine homesteading program. As one U.S. administrator observed: "A person who has filed application for a homestead with the knowledge that he will have to wait before he is informed whether that piece of land is available for him is not willing to exert himself to develop it further than is necessary."[48] Also discouraging the purchase and development of land was the concern among small farmers was the fear that after doing the labor of clearing the land, they would be forced to pay for the

[45] Frank W. Sherman, discussed this problem at length in a series of ten articles published in the *Manila Daily Bulletin* from October to December, 1929, titled "What's Wrong with the Lands Bureau?" #1762-81, BIA, Box 325, RG 350, NARA.
[46] Sherman, "What's Wrong with the Lands Bureau?" Box 325, RG 350, NARA; also, Ventura, "From Small Farms to Progressive Plantations," 459-461.
[47] *Census of the Philippine Islands*, 1903, v. 4, 197.
[48] Sherman, "What's Wrong with the Lands Bureau?" Box 325, RG 350, NARA.

improvements that they themselves had put into the land. Because most small farmers lacked the capital to purchase even unimproved lands, the Philippine Commission promoted leasing as a first step toward eventual ownership, but lacking any guarantees, this effort stalled.[49] Finally, as a delegate for the Ilocos Norte division of the Agrarian Union of the Philippines noted, most of the poor farmers whom they hoped to reach were "ignorant of the rigor of the laws on the important question of the titles to lands and the Homestead law (Law No. 926) which so greatly affect many land owners." As a result, he lamented, the "poor agriculturists" of the Philippines were vulnerable to the exploitation of caciques hungry for political power.[50]

Not surprisingly, those best positioned to benefit from the public lands legislation were elite Filipinos, those who had built their fortunes on landed wealth. Elite Filipinos used their political clout and better access to the land titling process to gain control over recently surveyed lands. In the rich sugar lands of Negros, for instance, wealthy sugar planters obtained legal title to many of the best sugar lands by using their connections in the provincial government to establish official claims. In some cases, that involved evicting inhabitants who had worked the land for years, but never obtained title. In regions like Negros and Pampanga, where labor was always in high demand for sugar cultivation, these newly displaced occupants likely became tenants or wage laborers on expanding sugar plantations.[51] The process of commodifying the land was thus a process of dispossession, which found precedent in earlier American land laws used to dispossess Native Americans, in particular, the Dawes Allotment Act (1887). American colonial administrators viewed land ownership as a cornerstone of liberal citizenship, evidence

[49] Leonard Wood to Gen. H. Bliss Tasker, July 5, 1906, Folder 4, Box 38, Wood Papers, LC. Dean Worcester made a similar observation in his explanation for small landholdings in *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1905), 37.
[50] Teogenes Quaiaoit to the Central Committee of the Agrarian Union of the Philippines, undated but probably from 1905 or 1906, #3134-4, BIA, Box 322, RG 350, NARA.
[51] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 69.

of Filipinos' preparedness, or lack thereof, for self-government. By securing the landholdings of individuals Filipinos, then, land registration was part of the broader project of racial uplift. The failure of ordinary Filipinos to gain land titles was recast as a racial failing that ultimately justified alternative forms of development and constructed a rationale for a racialized labor force. Despite, and indeed, because of their failure, land registration efforts represented Filipinos and other Native peoples as potential liberal subjects, objects of tutelage and uplift. Eventually, that racial formation was used to justify Filipino labor recruitment and to distinguish the Filipino migrant from the "coolie" or the slave.

With neither the resources necessary for homesteading to succeed nor any significant changes in the laws governing the distribution of public lands, Philippine land reform stagnated in the early years of U.S. colonial governance. By 1905 administrators like Dean Worcester declared the efforts toward homesteading a failure, pointing to the very small number of Filipinos who had applied for land patents as an indication of their lack of interest in land ownership and, by extension, their "fitness" for self-government. In his seventh annual report as Secretary of the Interior, he reported, "There is much indifference among the Filipinos toward acquiring title to land and so long as they are allowed to *occupy* public land they seem to care little whether or not they have title."[52] Rather than attributing the failure of homesteading to the defects of the law's construction or to the lack of resources necessary to implement such a policy, Worcester and other administrators blamed Filipinos for their failure to embrace land ownership and modernity, and encouraged an altogether different mode of development based on the racialized social organization of plantations.[53] Instead of settling Filipinos on farms as

[52] Dean Conant Worcester, *Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior to the Philippine Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1908* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1908), 62.
[53] Theresa Ventura argues that as hostilities with Filipinos came to an end, American commitment to Progressive land reform diminished. Administrators attributed the failure of American colonial land reform to peasant resistance

independent homesteaders, he argued: "Nothing would so much tend to add to the material well-being of the Filipinos as the establishment of plantations of considerable size, planted to sugar, cocoanuts [sic], tobacco, and other tropical products, and cultivated by modern machinery in an intelligent and progressive way." He concluded, "It is by object lessons of this character that the Filipino people are to be educated."[54]

Reconciling America's "exceptionalist" mission with the capitalist exploitation of the archipelago's resources required a great deal of intellectual labor. As Secretary of the Interior and a leading expert on the Philippines at the outset of colonial governance, Worcester played a significant role in shaping America's early Philippine policy. A zoologist by training, Worcester's Philippine career predated U.S. colonialism by more than ten years, beginning when he traveled to the archipelago as a student on a scientific expedition in 1887. In 1890, he organized a second expedition of the islands to explore the natural resources of the islands. During that trip, Worcester became acquainted with Spanish sugar hacenderos and other European entrepreneurs, including a former manager of the British commercial firm, Smith, Bell and Company, which had established a sugar plantation in Cebu. The efficient managerial style of Spanish and English land owners who oversaw various agricultural enterprises left a lasting impression on Worcester that would inform his future work as a colonial administrator. In his later writings, he drew a sharp contrast between the workers under the paternalistic care of the plantations and the so-called "hungry towns" of the interior where Filipinos lived on the verge of starvation. In 1898, in the midst of the Spanish-American War, Worcester published his book *The Philippine Islands and Their People*, establishing himself as an expert on the embattled

to land ownership. "From Small Farms to Progressive Plantations," 459-462.

[54] Dean Conant Worcester, "Public Lands," *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War* 1 (1905), 74-75.

Spanish colony and launching his colonial career. With this book, Worcester presented the American public with an image of Filipinos as racially degraded "savages" incapable of developing the abundant resources of the islands[55].

On the basis of Worcester's expertise, President William F. McKinley appointed him to the Schurman Commission in 1899 to make recommendations on how the United States should govern the islands after the Treaty of Paris (1898). The following year, McKinley appointed Worcester to the Philippine Commission, which served as the primary governing body in the Philippines until 1907. Additionally, he served as the Secretary of the Interior for the Insular Government of the Philippines until 1913, giving him authority over a number of government agencies, including the Bureau of Agriculture and the Bureau of Science. Worcester's efforts as a colonial administrator focused on developing the commercial potential of the Philippines. As chief of the Bureau of Agriculture, Worcester directed much of that department's activity toward research in the development of export agriculture. Throughout his tenure in the colonial administration, Worcester pressed the U.S. Congress to reform the land laws so as to encourage American investment in Philippine agriculture, pressing especially for larger landholdings that would enable large, plantation-style agriculture to flourish.[56]

The conversion of public lands into private property, together with laws against vagrancy and brigandage, shaped the Philippine peasantry into a landless proletariat that served the demands not only of capitalist production in the Philippines but increasingly the reproduction of U.S. colonial relations. U.S. administrators based public lands legislation on the assumption that

[55] Worcester, *The Philippine Islands and their People*, 242; Rodney J. Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism: The Philippine Career of Dean C. Worcester* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 21-22.

[56] Worcester looms large in the U.S. administration of the Philippines and his colonial career has been documented in several sources, most prolifically those produced by himself. Later studies of his career include Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism*, 80; Mark Rice, *Dean Worcester's Fantasy Islands: Photography, Film, and the Colonial Philippines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014).

capitalist development was inevitable, framing the distribution of public lands as an indicator of an exceptional colonialism designed to uplift rather than exploit. But although capitalist production in the Philippines predated the arrival of the United States, this form of development was neither inevitable nor exceptional. The new land titling system reinforced existing racialized structures of production that emerged under the Spanish by favoring larger landholdings by individuals with the resources to survey and develop the land. Those who had cultivated lands for generations but never acquired legal titles were refigured as "squatters," rendered vulnerable to dispossession by the state.[57] Laws against vagrancy and brigandage further defined the bounds of legitimate subsistence and social reproduction by using the coercive power of the state to control the movements and behavior of unpropertied Filipinos, to transform them into cheap, mobile workers. The work of colonial expansion was, therefore, an inherently racial project that ultimately made the Filipino masses into landless laborers.

Colonial Education and the Philippine Bureau of Agriculture

In the colonial project to remake Filipinos into mobile "free labor," public lands went hand in hand with U.S. colonial education. From the outset of colonial rule, the Philippine Commission saw education as a critical component of the broader project of racial uplift, and as a way of winning the hearts and minds of a population that stubbornly resisted American authority. Progressive imperialists believed they could shape the course of Philippine development and realize the racial "uplift" of the Filipino people through an ambitious educational program. Over the first decade of U.S. colonial rule, the proper course of colonial economic development was debated in part through education policy. But while American

[57] *Census of the Philippine Islands*, 1903, v. 4, 189; *Census of the Philippine Islands*, 1918, v. 3, 6, 875.

political battles were fought over U.S. policy in the Philippines, efforts to remake Philippine subjects through education were overdetermined by the forces of capital that preceded the arrival of U.S. colonial rule. The imperative to produce for the world market placed specific demands on shaping Filipinos into a particular type of laboring subject, an end that shaped American educational efforts.

The U.S. military led the effort to establish public education in the Philippines, highlighting the strategic objectives of early schooling. When U.S. troops arrived in 1898, they found little in the way of an educational infrastructure. Though Spain had begun taking steps to establish a general system of primary schools beginning in the 1860s, few Filipinos outside a small circle of elites received any formal schooling through the end of the Spanish period. And what progress had been made in expanding access to education was disrupted by warfare against Spain and the United States.[58] Just weeks after the United States "captured" the city of Manila from Spanish forces in a mock battle on August 13, 1898, the military organized seven schools in Manila at the encouragement of General Elwell Otis. By the following June, the military oversaw 39 schools, and when the Philippine Commission took control of education in September 1900, the military was operating 1,000 schools, with soldiers serving as teachers and English education their highest priority. The rapid introduction of schools by the U.S. military was part of the effort to pacify the islands. Justifying the expense of Philippine schools, General Arthur MacArthur explained: "This appropriation is recommended primarily and exclusively as an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people and to procure and expedite the restoration of tranquility throughout the archipelago."[59]

[58] *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1900), vol. 1, 17-18, 32-33.
[59] *Census of the Philippine Islands,* 1903, vol. 3, 640.

When education came under civilian control, pacification continued to be one of its objectives, but the U.S. assertion of a new "benevolent" imperialism in the islands brought about a shift in educational objectives in the Philippines. Fred Atkinson, who was tasked with organizing the first general system of public schools for the Philippines, summed up America's educational mission as he understood it:

> The Filipinos are incapable of self-government; in their affairs they are managed by a few ambitious leaders…Independence is a cherished ideal of the Filipinos, that they may ultimately realize this ideal is, the writer believes, the unexpressed purpose of those who have undertaken the tutelage of these peoples…The question of the right of a higher civilization to dominate a lower is one capable of much discussion; the only justification, surely, for such an extension of sovereignty is the material improvement and the intellectual and moral elevation of the weaker race.[60]

Like many other Americans who arrived in the islands during this period, Atkinson lamented what he perceived as a lack of industry among Filipinos, and determined that the best course of uplift for Filipinos was teaching them to value manual labor. He observed, "One thing that impresses the newcomer deeply is the wonderful possibility of the archipelago in an agricultural way, and with the transformation of these natives into a contented laboring people the degree of self-support which is necessary and possible will be realized."[61] As the first director of the Bureau of Education, Fred Atkinson promoted industrial education modeled on the Hampton Institute and the Tuskegee Institute, whose objectives were to promote cultural uplift among African Americans through an education that combined moral instruction with training in manual labor. Their simultaneous objectives were to "advance" African Americans as a race and relegate them to the lowest forms of labor in the Southern economy.[62] Atkinson built his Philippine

[60] Fred W. Atkinson, *The Philippine Islands* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1905), 5-6.
[61] Atkinson, *The Philippine Islands*, 412.
[62] Gary Y. Okihiro, *Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 106-107.

educational program on the idea that, like African Americans in the United States, Filipinos' best hope for advancement was to learn a skill or a trade.[63]

The notion that industrial education was the best course for "backward races" found an even earlier precedent in American-run missionary schools in Hawai'i. In particular, the Hilo Boarding School, founded by New England missionaries in 1836, was meant to transform Hawaiian boys into "useful Christian citizens," lifting them from a state of barbarism to civilization through rigorous manual labor. New England missionaries argued that Native Hawaiians lacked the capacity to appreciate a liberal arts education and that such "over-education" would only lead to vanity and dissatisfaction with the life of manual labor, to which they were consigned. According to Richard Chapman Armstrong, another New England missionary who served as King Kamehameha III's minister of public instruction, the problem of education in Hawai'i was directly related to the problem of land utilization and sought to develop a curriculum focused on agricultural training and "proper land use." After leaving Hawai'i to fight in the Civil War, Armstrong's son, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, carried these ideas about education to his own educational work in the Freedmen's Bureau and, later, to his work in founding the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia in 1868. Gary Okihiro observes, "the ideas of native education and servile labor for the ostensible uplift of subject races migrated between island and continent." Industrial education served to bring recently emancipated African Americans back to their positions at the bottom of the southern economic hierarchy and to subjugate Native Americans in the ongoing colonization of the U.S. West.[64] These ideas once again crossed the Pacific to serve U.S. imperial objectives in the Philippines.

[63] Glenn Anthony May, "The Business of Education in the Colonial Philippines, 1909-30," in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, eds. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 152.
[64] Okihiro, *Island World,* 103-116, 134.

To meet the demands of the new school system, the Philippine Bureau of Education recruited 765 teachers by September 1901. These teachers, referred to as "Thomasites"—named for the *USS Thomas*, which carried many of them across the Pacific to the Philippines—reflected the dual objectives of violent pacification and nonviolent. In a retrospective on Philippine education under the United States, Walter Marquardt, who served as director of the Bureau of Education from 1916 to 1919, wrote of their mission: "The sending of almost one thousand teachers to an unknown land on the other side of the world for the purpose of developing a subject race into an independent one was something new in the history of the world…The insurrection was not completely over and it came to be said that one American teacher was worth a regiment of soldiers in bring about the complete pacification of the islands."[65] Marquardt and others also referred to the "pioneer spirit" of the Thomasites, evincing a missionary zeal for the enterprise. Aside from teaching English and vague pronouncements of racial "uplift," however, the objectives of the Philippine education for the first decade of U.S. rule shifted with the personalities and talents of administrators, reflecting an uncertainty about the U.S. role in the Philippines. It was widely agreed that the introduction of scientific agricultural methods should be an essential part of American educational efforts.[66] Early on, however, a tension emerged over whether education should prepare Filipinos for enlightened citizenship or train them for the kind of productive labor that many within the U.S. colonial administration deemed necessary to raise the Philippines out of poverty.

[65] Walter W. Marquardt, "American Pioneers in the Philippine Schools," 33, Box 7; Papers re. Philippine Education; Walter W. Marquardt Papers (Marquardt Papers), Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan (UM).

[66] In 1902 the Taft Commission recommended compulsory public education for all Filipino children aged six to twelve. Besides English-language instruction, the commission emphasized the need for agricultural schools, in order "That the Filipinos may be in a position to develop the vast agricultural resources of these islands." *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1900), 112. This argument was repeated in several official reports and by colonial officials like Dean Worcester and Frank Carpenter.

Atkinson's successor, David P. Barrows, de-emphasized industrial education after his appointment in 1903. A strong believer in the Jeffersonian ideal, in which an educated citizenry was a necessary precondition for a free and democratic government, Barrows promoted an academic curriculum that emphasized a civic education. He was deeply concerned with what he saw as Filipinos' inclination to defer to authority, drawing on the framework of caciquism, and believed a strong education would encourage independence among the Philippine populace. He explained:

> The social condition being understood, public instruction in the Philippines was organized with the conscious purpose of transforming the condition and position of the gente baja. Our aim is to destroy caciquismo and to replace the dependent class with a body of independent peasantry, owning their own homes, able to read and write, and thereby gain access to independent sources of information, able to perform simple calculations, keep their own accounts and consequently to rise out of their condition of indebtedness, and inspired if possible with a new spirit of self-respect, a new consciousness of personal dignity and civil rights.[67]

Along the same lines, O. Garfield Jones, a political scientist who served as a member of the Bureau of Education during its early years, argued that industrial education, while indispensable, was secondary to the development of literacy and culture.[68] While the goals of self-sufficiency and independence were widely accepted among Americans in tune with Philippine education, Barrows and Jones had a seemingly loftier agenda. Specifically, they sought to use public education to promote the development of an independent yeomanry, in contrast to an industrial proletariat.

Barrows's deprioritization of industrial education put him at odds with many of the American teachers who served below him the Bureau of Education and elsewhere in the insular

[67] David P. Barrows, "Education and Social Progress in the Philippines," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 30 (1907), 73. See also, *Annual Report of the General Superintendent of Education* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1904), 33.
[68] O. Garfield Jones, "Education for Citizenship in Philippine Public Schools," found in *Special Articles*, Bureau of Education, Box 7, Marquardt Papers, UM.

government, most of whom doubted the capacity of Filipinos for self-government.[69] Harry N. Cole, a Thomasite teaching in the province of Leyte, frequently voiced contempt for his Filipino students in his letters to his family, complaining: "I find this work very monotonous trying to teach these monkeys to talk…The most of these people are lazy and indolent, and I do not think they can stick to it to get an education."[70] He later concluded that Filipinos would only be uplifted by coming into contact with a "better and stronger race," which could lead the way in modernizing the Philippines.[71]

The complaint of Filipino laziness was a common refrain among American teachers and officials in the Philippines to explain what they saw as a labor shortage that hindered the economic development of the islands.[72] American educators and administrators were particularly concerned about Filipino attitudes toward manual labor—that they thought it undignified—and worried that the "wrong" type of education might encourage this tendency. Those opposed to Barrows's academic course of study further worried that such an education would unduly raise Filipino aspirations and ultimately breed discontent. As one of Barrows's opponents wrote to him, "For my part I look forward with anxiety to the time when many of these boys scattered throughout the Islands, shall have proved themselves incapable of success in their chosen careers but shall hold themselves too good for tilling the soil though not too good for ladronism or the support of ladronism."[73] Writing to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson in 1911, Worcester

[69] Glenn Anthony May, *Social Engineering in the Philippines: The Aims, Execution, and Impact of American Colonial Policy, 1900-1913* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980), 105-112.
[70] Harry N. Cole letter, November 5, 1901, Folder Oct.-Nov. 1901, Box 1, Harry N. Cole Papers (Cole Papers), UM. Complaints about Filipinos' laziness and lack of capacity to learn abound in Cole's letters, and apparently were not uncommon. While serving as Director of Education from 1916-1919, Walter Marquardt reprimanded one American teacher who derided her Filipino students even as he complained frequently of the laziness of Filipinos. See *Personal Letters*, Box 5, Marquardt Papers; and documents in Folder 1992 accession, Box 5, Marquardt Papers, UM.
[71] Cole, Letter, April 30, 1903, Box 1, Cole Papers, UM.
[72] *Census of the Philippine Islands*, 1903, vol. 4, 427.
[73] William E. Ritter to Barrows, July 12, 1906, BIA, Box 322, RG 350, NARA.

cautioned that, although the near-universal desire for education among Filipinos was a hopeful sign, "It is, however, accompanied too often by a belief common in a young people that education will liberate them from the necessity of working… and they study in order to prevent the necessity of their performing manual labor."[74]

Barrows, continually frustrated by what he saw as the Philippine Commission's lukewarm commitment to education, resigned from his post in 1909, effectively ending the Jeffersonian experiment in Philippine education. His resignation came just as the United States enacted a new tariff policy that effectively established free trade between the United States and the Philippines, further intensifying the orientation of the Philippine economy toward the production of export goods produced on centralized plantations. Also in 1909, newly elected U.S. President William Howard Taft appointed William Cameron Forbes Governor-General of the Philippines. An investment banker who had served in the insular government since 1904, Forbes's primary goal was to promote the economic development of the islands by encouraging foreign investment. To this end, he advocated for a reallocation of government funds toward infrastructural development. Under Forbes's administration, the pendulum swung back toward a focus on industrial education and an overall theory about the type of development that ought to be pursued in the Philippines.[75]

The renewed emphasis on industrial education revealed a shift in how colonial administrators thought about the relationship between economic development and racial uplift. In education, this meant industrial training, particularly in rural areas, even at the expense of other subjects. Frank L. Crone, acting director of the Bureau of Education, wrote in 1912, that the

[74] Worcester to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, August 11, 1911, Papers, 1911-1913, Box 1, Dean Conant Worcester Papers (Worcester Papers), UM.
[75] May, *Social Engineering in the Philippines*, 116.

proper role of rural schools was to teach children to appreciate the country life and not desire to leave. In this endeavor, he argued, a formal education could be counterproductive insofar as a "higher literary existence" would likely cause discontent with life on a farm.[76] Articles in the *Filipino Teacher*, a trade journal aimed at Filipino teachers, were filled with admonishments to "urge the children to love manual labor" and encouraged parents to teach their children the dignity of labor and encourage regular attendance at school.[77] Though English and academic subjects continued to be taught to a lesser degree, Filipino schools devoted an increasing amount of class time to agriculture and industrial arts like weaving.[78]

Like land reform, American colonial education fell far short of the radical social engineering envisioned by some administrators. In its efforts to create a class of small farmers and break the power of caciques, in particular, colonial education was an utter failure. In his *Annual Report of the Bureau of Education* for 1907-1908, Barrows observed, optimistically, that social conditions were tending toward a more democratic nature. However, he continued, the progress in the lives of rural Filipinos was uncertain. The class of small farmers or "peasant proprietors" had made no impressionable gains, and the most important crops, including rice and coconuts, tended to be concentrated in large estates and worked by tenants. Sugar continued to be raised almost exclusively on large haciendas that relied on seasonal wage workers and tenants living in a state of virtual serfdom.[79] As American administrators and, increasingly, Filipino politicians retreated from Progressive education and land reform, they began pursuing a model of development that intensified this trend through the expropriation and exploitation of natural

[76] Frank L. Crone to Barksdale Hamlett, December 27, 1912, #3140-108, BIA, Box 322, RG 350, NARA.
[77] Philippine Teachers' Association, *The Filipino Teacher* 1, no. 10 (January 1908): 8, and other issues in the series.
[78] The shift in emphasis toward manual trading in agricultural and crafts can be seen in publications like the *Filipino Teacher* and the *Annual Reports of the Director of Education* (1901-1911); for a historical overview of the industrialization of education from 1909-1930, see May, "The Business of Education."
[79] *Annual Report of the Director of Education*, (1907-08), 9.

resources by outside capital, especially from the incorporated regions of the United States. With this shift, the uplift of Filipinos was redefined within a framework of capitalist production, where modern liberal subjectivity rested on labor discipline, not land ownership.

American Capital and Agricultural Colonies

Less than a decade into America's colonial project in the Philippines, arguments in favor of development based on outside investment had prevailed over more transformative schemes based on democratic land redistribution and liberal education. New tariff legislation in 1909 established a stronger trade relationship with the United States that further encouraged outside investments in export agriculture and deepened Philippine dependence on the export economy. But the 1912 election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson to the U.S. presidency and his appointment of Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison heralded a new era of Philippine-American relations. Filipinization—the inclusion of Filipinos in all levels of government—opened new possibilities for ilustrados to advance their own agendas for Philippine development. In 1907, the Philippines elected the first Philippine Assembly, a lower house in the Philippine legislature, which, unlike the Philippine Commission, was composed entirely of Filipinos, creating a new avenue of power for ilustrados seeking to influence Philippine politics. Mobilizing a nationalist rhetoric, Filipino politicians asserted a vision for modernizing the Philippines and its peoples that challenged the authority of U.S. power, even as it replicated its colonial logic.

The competing visions and complex relationships of Filipino politicians and American administrators emerged in debates over plans to colonize the island of Mindanao in the southern part of the archipelago. Beginning in 1907, Filipino politicians proposed the establishment of agricultural colonies in the primarily Muslim province of the Philippines. Philippine elites in the

colonial administration looked to Mindanao as a safety valve to relieve the pressures of poverty and overpopulation, which, they argued, bred social discontent among rural Filipinos. Many U.S. administrators argued that, rather than state-sponsored settlement, commercial plantations were the ideal model for development in Mindanao. As Secretary of the Interior for the insular government of the Philippines, Dean Worcester was the primary booster of this form of development. Under his leadership, the Philippine Bureau of Commerce and Industry published regular reports about the potential for the commercial production of pineapple, sugar, and coconut, hailing the advantages of the Philippines over Hawai‘i in an effort to encourage investment. After he retired from the Philippine service in 1913, Worcester tirelessly evangelized to investors in the United States.[80]

Against this vision of development the Manila-centered, Christian ilustrados in the Philippine government proposed the resettlement of Mindanao by hundreds of thousands of Christian Filipinos, particularly from overpopulated provinces like Ilocos to the north. In addition to balancing an uneven population, they envisioned the colonization of the predominantly Muslim Mindanao as part of an effort to assert themselves as rightful representatives of the Philippine nation. Employing a logic of settler colonialism, Filipino politicians argued that the best means of developing and modernizing Mindanao was to encourage the immigration of Christian Filipinos to the region. They were particularly interested in colonizing Mindanao as a means of incorporating and assimilating the primarily non-Christian population of Mindanao into the broader Philippine population. As Cayetano Lukban wrote in the 1918 Census of the Philippine Islands: “It will be a glorious day for these Islands when the

[80] See series #26959-15 BIA, Box 1177, RG 350, NARA. Worcester’s correspondence abounds in personal communications boasting of the investment opportunities in the Philippines, particularly after he resigned from the Philippine Commission to become Vice President of the American-Philippine Company in 1913. See “Correspondence, Box 1, Worcester Papers, UM.

people of the various regions shall have become assimilated among themselves and shall have given the lie to the statement that we are still a divided people. Who will not rejoice to see the Ilocanos of the North intermarrying with the non-Christian inhabitants of the South? Who will not be proud when the fertile plains of Davao shall have become the granary of these islands?"[81] Like the U.S. West a generation earlier, Mindanao was envisioned as a largely uninhabited but resource-rich territory that could be appropriated and distributed among the predominantly Christian Filipino population.

The resemblance between the discourses surrounding proposals to colonize Mindanao and the settlement of the U.S. West attests to the complementary roles of settler colonialism and migrant labor in producing ideas about the nation. The racialization of migrant labor enabled modern states to maintain the fiction of the nation by marking those who were valued only for their labor as the Other. The obverse of migrant labor is settler colonialism: whether in California, Hawai'i, or Mindanao, the replacement and assimilation of Indigenous peoples by a settler population enables the settler state to lay claim over a territory and its resources through a genocidal logic of elimination. It is the same logic of "kill the Indian...save the man" advanced by Richard Henry Pratt in his founding of the Carlisle Indian Industrial in 1879. The idea was that Moros (Muslims) living in Mindanao could be amalgamated to the dominant Christian Filipino society through a mass resettlement project, advancing the notion that Moros could be incorporated into the Philippines, but not as Moros.[82] The motivations of Philippine elites who

[81] *Census of the Philippine Islands*, 1918, 890.

[82] Patrick Wolfe describes settler colonialism as "a structure not an event," in which settler colonizers replace Indigenous society. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, elaborates this definition to explain that "the logic of elimination of the native is about the elimination of the native as *native*." Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006):388; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral 5.1* (Spring 2016), doi: 10.25158/L5.1.7. See also, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40. For multiple perspectives on the history and legacy of the Carlisle Indian school, see Jacqueline Fear-Senegal and Susan D. Rose, eds., *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and*

promoted the colonization of Mindanao brought together a series of issues: by absorbing Mindanao within the Philippine nation, elite Filipinos asserted themselves as the natural leaders of the Philippines, while also alleviating the conditions of poverty among large concentrations of landless Filipinos, circumstances which had bred peasant movements and agrarian unrest.

The Philippine Assembly introduced the first colonization bill to encourage the migration of landless or poor Filipinos in 1907, but early efforts to establish agricultural colonies in Mindanao were repeatedly struck down by the American-dominated Philippine Commission, who made paternalistic claims about the need to protect the Muslim population from Christian settlers. In his study of this legislative process, Nobutaka Suzuki frames the colonization of Mindanao within a broader power struggle between Filipinos in the Assembly and the Philippine Commission rooted in the unique history of Mindanao. Like the earlier Spanish regime, the United States administered the Muslim population of Mindanao separately from the rest of the Philippines. The Moro province remained under the authority of an American military governor until 1913, long after the rest of the archipelago had been organized under a civilian government.[83]

Worcester, who had assumed the role of paternalistic protector of non-Christian Filipinos, was particularly resistant to the Filipinization of the government of Mindanao.[84] In a long letter to Frank W. Carpenter in 1914, the governor of the province, he argued that the "control and

Reclamations (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

[83] Nobutaka Suzuki, "Upholding Filipino Nationhood: The debate over Mindanao in the Philippine Legislature, 1907-1913," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (June 2013): 274-279.

[84] Outside the core population of Christianized Filipinos, there were several other ethnic groups that had resisted Spanish colonization, often by retreating to mountainous or heavily forested areas. These ethnic groups, which included Cordillera people from the mountains of Luzon, the Bukidnon in Mindanao, and Negritos who occupied the highlands, among many others. The Bureau of Insular Affairs governed this population under a separate Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, which included both pagan and Muslim groups. Worcester frequently invoked the purported abuse of the non-Christian tribes by the majority Filipino population to argue against Philippine independence. Worcester to Taft, January 27, 1908, Correspondence, 1907-19011, Box 1, Worcester Papers, UM.

uplifting of peoples like those designated as non-Christians in the Philippine Islands is a work requiring special characteristics." Suggesting that Christian Filipinos were not qualified for such an important task, he further advised:

> The needs of your people and the wishes of the politicians in regard to them are not compatible. Don't talk to me about applying the municipal code to the Manobos, much less to the Moros, either now or in the near future, and don't talk to me about a Filipino governor for the district of Davao if you have any intention of doing the work that ought long since to have been done, and has practically not as yet commenced for the backward peoples of that great territory. That is a white man's job, and it will take a mighty good white man to do it.[85]

The Muslims living in the Moro Province were themselves in favor of maintaining a separate U.S. administration of the province. Despite a relationship with the United States that was, at best, ambivalent, Muslims in Moro Province sought American protection against the incursions of Christian Filipino settlers. Meanwhile, Americans with business interests in Mindanao proposed that Mindanao should be separated from the Philippines and made into a U.S. territory in 1905 and again in 1910, fueling the animosity between the assembly and the commission. Increasingly, however, ilustrados with nationalist ambitions demanded control over the region.[86]

Over the objections of Worcester and others in the administration, the agricultural colonization of Mindanao overcame opposition in the Philippine Legislature in 1913. The Wilson Administration ushered in a new era of Filipinization, giving Filipinos a more visible role in the government. Additionally, significant rice shortages in 1912 emphasized the need for a more balanced agriculture. In February the Philippine Legislature appropriated ₱400,000 to establish agricultural colonies, with the stated objectives of increasing the production of rice, relieving the congestion of highly populated regions in Luzon and the Visayas, and encouraging property ownership.

[85] Worcester to Carpenter, August 7, 2014, Correspondence, July-Dec. 1914, Box 1, Worcester Papers, UM.
[86] Suzuki, "Upholding Filipino Nationhood," 266.

The colonies were meant to address some of the problems of the original homesteading efforts by coordinating public services with settlement efforts and providing cash and other resources to settlers. The project included financial assistance to Filipinos to emigrate from the densely populated provinces to take up homesteads in sparsely populated Mindanao, where large tracts of unclaimed agricultural lands remained within the public domain. Individuals interested in securing financial assistance and other forms of government support in the agricultural colony signed an agreement that required them to apply for and register a homestead entry on designated agricultural public land, cultivate a minimum amount of land, and maintain a household. Within that gendered order, the colonist and his family were to receive free transportation, building materials, cash advances, and other supplies (such as carabao and tools) to see them through the first year.[87] As with earlier homesteading efforts, however, support for agricultural colonies diminished within a few years as those in government became discouraged by the early results. Poor crop turnout due to a combination of administrative problems, settlers' inexperience with farming, and severe drought caused the colonies to depend on government support much longer than expected. In 1917 the government discontinued making loans to colonists and encouraged only the migration individuals with enough resources on hand to see themselves through their first year.[88]

Conclusion

Homesteading, colonization, and free patents—the means to transform Filipinos into a nation of independent, landed proprietors—remained inaccessible to the majority of Filipinos.

[87] Frank Carpenter, "Report of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu," *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1915), 373-374.
[88] Karl J. Pelzer, *Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1948), 132.

The cost of surveying the land was too great, and the lack of tools and livestock remained insurmountable barriers as long as the United States or Filipinos in government refused to make a greater commitment to enact meaningful social reforms in the Philippines. Instead, the public land laws were used to commodify the land and alienate Filipinos from it. Mobilizing racial arguments, colonial administrators like Dean Worcester reimagined Philippine progress as commercial production for an export market. The violence and displacement of colonial land policy, manifest in the migration of Filipinos both within the Philippines and beyond, was perpetuated in the economic structures emergent under U.S. colonial administration and within the capitalist order. But those within official government colonies represented only a fraction of the total migration to Mindanao, with some estimates placing the total net migration of Filipinos to the island at nearly 700,000 individuals between 1903 and 1939.[89] As Resil Mojares argues, Cebuanos had begun relocating to Mindanao in response to ecological and economic pressures as early as the late-nineteenth century.[90] But because most migrants lacked either the resources or the incentives to lay legal claims for homestead or purchase, those who relocated to Mindanao outside the auspices of a government program became squatters, tenants, or laborers.[91]

Through the commodification of land by means of public lands legislation, U.S. colonial administrators sought to produce a liberal subjectivity among Filipinos by making them into mobile and voluntary workers of the U.S. empire. Alienated from the land, these workers could then be transported to meet the demands of the United States, within and beyond the Philippines. But the transpacific migrations of Filipino labor into the U.S. metropole conflicted with the

[89] Frederick L. Wernstedt and Paul D. Simkins, "Migrations and the Settlement of Mindanao," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25, no. 1 (1965): 92.
[90] Mojares, "Cebuano Perceptions of the Hawaii Migration, 1909-1934," 88.
[91] *Census of the Philippine Islands* 1918, 6.

objectives of racialized free labor in the United States, a contradiction through which U.S. imperial formations would consolidate in the coming decade.

Chapter Four

Unsettling Labor: The Transpacific Anti-Japanese Movement and the New Migrant Worker

Introduction

On May 11, 1909, F. M. Swanzy, managing director of Theo. H. Davies & Co., one of the largest sugar corporations known as the Big Five, wrote of the strike rapidly unfolding on O‘ahu: “The labour conditions on this Island have just become quite serious and now Japanese from Honolulu Plantation and Mill and from the Oahu Plantation’s Mill are on strike.”[1] On May 9, the Japanese workers at the Aiea Plantation mill camp walked off the job, demanding an increase in pay, the standardization of wages across racial groups, a reduction of the workday to ten hours, and improvements to housing and camp sanitation. Japanese workers objected in particular to pay disparities stratified according to race. Within days workers from nearby plantations and mills joined the Aiea mill workers’ effort, and by the end of the month, the strike involved more than 7,000 Japanese plantation workers across O‘ahu, bringing sugar production on the island to a halt. Over three months strikers faced off against a well-organized front of plantation owners and managers who evicted striking workers from plantation housing and hired Chinese and Portuguese workers to break the strike. By early August, with their resources depleted, the strikers conceded defeat. But the workers did not lose everything, forcing planters, who had lost millions of dollars, to raise wages, improve worker housing, and address racial wage disparities. Recognizing the effectiveness of Japanese labor organization, Hawaii’s planters

[1] F. M. Swanzy to George McCubbin, May 11, 1909, Laupahoehoe Sugar Company (LSC) 47/1, Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association Plantation Archives, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library Hawaiian Collection (HSPA Records).

and sugar agencies set about undermining the collective power of Japanese workers through the mass recruitment of Filipinos.[2]

The 1909 O‘ahu strike was part of an ongoing struggle against the haole planter regime that emerged in the wake of Hawaii’s annexation to the United States. Hawaii’s sugar planters had advocated strongly for annexation, anticipating that their plantations would become more profitable if their sugar was permanently exempt from U.S. tariffs. In bringing Hawai‘i within the domestic space of the United States, however, annexation also undermined planters’ control over their Japanese workers, whom they had consigned to the bottom of the plantation hierarchy. Most significantly, annexation facilitated the mobility of Hawaii’s plantation workers to the U.S. mainland. Shortly after annexation, thousands of workers protested conditions on Hawaiian plantations by leaving for the California coast. Recognizing their centrality to the Hawaiian sugar economy, Japanese workers who remained in Hawai‘i grew more assertive and mounted a series of successful strikes. At the same time, the mass migration of Japanese workers from Hawai‘i to California fueled a growing anti-Japanese movement on the West Coast that threatened to end Japanese migration to the United States and its territories completely, cutting off the sugar planters’ most important labor supply. Faced with the unanticipated consequences of annexation, the Hawaii’s sugar planters—organized as the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA)[3]—increasingly looked to the Philippines to supply laborers that would enable the reproduction of plantation hierarchies amid growing political scrutiny.

[2] There are several studies covering the 1909 strike, including Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1983), 153-164; Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1985), 169-176; and Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii’s Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 28-33.
[3] In 1895, Hawaii’s sugar planters founded the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association to promote the interests of the Hawaiian sugar industry. In particular, the HSPA coordinated to recruit workers, lobby the U.S. government for legislation favorable to Hawaiian sugar, and set standard wage rates and working conditions for plantation workers.

This chapter situates the early recruitment of Filipinos to work in the cane fields of Hawai‘i within the context of a transpacific anti-Japanese movement. The movement of Japanese workers to the West Coast, catalyzed by the 1909 O‘ahu strike, amplified white Americans’ concerns about growing Japanese settlement in the United States, but these anxieties had been brewing for more than a decade, particularly among white farmers. Like haole planters in Hawai‘i, white farmers on the West Coast had a vexing and paradoxical relationship with Japanese workers: they depended on Japanese and other migrant workers to perform the onerous stoop labor of valuable crops, including sugar beet, but were wary of the growing visibility of Japanese workers in their communities as well as their potential to become economic competitors. The racial division of labor had made it possible for even small-scale farmers to profit from their agricultural pursuits, but over time, Japanese workers established families and communities on the West Coast, resisting the dominant labor formation that fixed them as migrants. In turn, the growing visibility of Japanese in West Coast farms and cities sparked a backlash from white labor organizations and West Coast politicians, who began agitating for a national exclusion of Japanese workers, threatening the labor foundation of the Hawaiian plantation system.

A direct challenge to planter paternalism, the O‘ahu strike dramatically demarcated the shift from the coercive labor regime of pre-annexation Hawai‘i defined by the Masters and Servants Act (1850) to a new and ostensibly “free” labor regime as a territory of the United States, a transformation that historian Edward D. Beechert described as a “stage of transition between coolie labor and free labor.”[4] In the wake of industrialization and amid aggressive U.S. expansion, the meaning of free labor, which had been so central to U.S. identity before and after

[4] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 176.

the Civil War, was itself in a stage of transition. The rise of big business undermined republican ideals of self-sufficiency and individual mobility at the same time that annexation brought vast numbers of nonwhite subjects into the United States, challenging white Americans' assumptions about race and the capacity for citizenship and self-government. The conflict between Japanese workers and Hawaiian sugar planters was embroiled in these larger debates. Anti-Japanese politicians and working-class whites portrayed Japanese as racially antithetical to free labor to demand their exclusion from the United States, even as the agricultural economies on both sides of the Pacific depended on their labor. Ultimately, Hawaiian sugar planters' recruitment of Filipinos helped to resolve those contradictions.

Hawaii's sugar planters justified Filipino labor recruitment as a part of the imperial project of development and uplift. Framed in the language of "free labor," tutelage, and economic development, the discourse of development in Filipino recruitment elided Japanese resistance to the coercive labor regime of the plantation economy. As U.S. colonial subjects, Filipinos did not just represent new migrant workers; they represented a new kind of migrant worker, subjects of the American project of "benevolent assimilation" in the Philippines. Through those processes across the Pacific, various facets of anti-Japanese racism naturalized California as a "settled" part of the United States, framed Hawai‘i as integral to U.S. national defense, and projected the Philippines as a site of U.S. benevolent intervention. The vast U.S. empire, in short, cohered around the transpacific movements of Japanese and Filipino workers. Those movements simultaneously challenged and reinforced the racial logic of the U.S. empire.

From Japan to Hawai‘i to the U.S. Mainland

On March 30, 1906 Shinbei Uyehata arrived in Honolulu aboard the *America Maru*.[5] Like many other Japanese men who crossed the Pacific from 1900 to 1907, eighteen-year-old Uyehata left his home in the Hiroshima prefecture hoping to make his fortune and return to Japan, where his family were farmers. Although there was ample work for Japanese laborers in the sugarcane and pineapple plantations, Uyehata had no intention of remaining in Hawai‘i as a plantation hand. Enticed by the promise of higher wages on the West Coast, he boarded a ship bound for San Francisco just two weeks after his arrival in the islands. From there, he continued on to the Salinas Valley, joining the thousands of Japanese laborers who filled the ranks of California's burgeoning agricultural industry. He appeared in the 1910 census alongside more than a hundred other Japanese and a smaller number of Indian, Portuguese, and Chinese migrants listed as farm laborers on a sugar beet farm in the Soledad Township of Monterey County. Not content to remain a laborer, Uyehata transitioned from wage labor on large-scale farming operations, to sharecropping in the Santa Clara Valley, and finally to leasing lands to farm for himself. When World War II broke out, he was leasing 40 acres of land, where he cultivated sugar beets for the Spreckels Sugar Company in Salinas.[6]

Uyehata's movement through Hawai‘i and California exemplified the contradictions produced by U.S. colonization in the Pacific. Hawaii's incorporation into the United States had been a significant boon to the islands' sugar industry: by making the conditions of reciprocity, first established in the 1876 treaty, permanent, annexation ensured the free flow of sugar and

5 Shinbei Uyehata petition for naturalization (1954) naturalization file number 110856, California, District Court of the United States for the Northern District, California; *Naturalization Records*, Record Group 21, National Archives at San Francisco, San Bruno, CA.

6 Roy T. Uyehata, interview by Dr. Joe Yasutake, February 28, 1998, *REgenerations Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era*, ed. Japanese American National Museum, vol. 4, *San Jose Region* (Los Angeles, Japanese American National Museum, 2000), 539.

investment capital between Hawai‘i and the continental United States in a way that trade agreements, subject to political shifts, could not. But annexation also facilitated the free flow of labor, undermining the control of Hawaii's sugar planters' over their labor force and, by extension, their productivity. Specifically, the organization of Hawai‘i as a U.S. territory rendered illegal the Masters and Servants Act, which, prior to annexation, bound workers to plantations in a coercive system of indentured labor. In 1850 the Hawaiian legislature, by then already under the influence of haole planters, passed into law "An Act for the Governance of Masters and Servants," to regulate the growing numbers of indentured laborers brought into Hawai‘i. Under the Masters and Servants Act, desertion constituted a breach of contract that was punishable by imprisonment at hard labor, fines, and limitless extensions of the labor contract. Punitive contract extensions could transform a three-year labor agreement into an indefinite term of servitude. After the United States annexed Hawai‘i, many workers seized upon the new conditions to demand higher wages and better working conditions through collective action. Others pursued their freedom by seeking other shores.[7]

In the years following Hawaii's annexation, migration to the West Coast served as one of the key tactics by which Japanese workers challenged the haole planter regime. For those who had lived and labored in Hawaii's sugar plantations, crossing the Pacific to San Francisco or Seattle provided a means of escaping oppressive labor conditions on the islands and the possibility of asserting greater control over their working lives. For others, like Uyehata, Hawai‘i was merely a stepping stone to the mainland.[8] Although the ability to move freely within the United States opened to workers a new avenue of resistance, the movement of large numbers of

[7] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 112-117.
[8] Yuji Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors and the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railroad Companies, 1898-1907," *Labor History* 21 no. 3 (June 1980): 327-328.

Japanese to the West Coast produced racial anxieties across the Pacific. Although Japanese laborers had been essential to the development of western agriculture, their growing numbers generated intense resentment among white workers. While Hawaiian sugar planters grappled with how to rein in the laborers on whom they depended, in California, labor organizations and politicians joined a growing anti-Japanese exclusion movement formalized with the creation of the Japanese Exclusion League in 1905. Through wide-ranging propaganda efforts and legal measures, the Japanese Exclusion League stoked white anxieties over job competition and fears of a more nebulous "yellow peril" to exclude Japanese immigrants from the United States.[9]

By the time of annexation, Japanese labor migration to Hawai'i was a well-established business with an efficient and systematic process. The recruitment of workers bound for Hawai'i was carried out by five emigration companies based in Japan that recruited workers, arranged their passage to Hawai'i, and entered into contracts with plantations as their co-signers. Following the advice of their Japanese associates, HSPA labor brokers focused their recruitment efforts on the Hiroshima and Yamaguchi prefectures, in part, because people there were supposedly, "sensible and law-abiding, not radical or revolutionary," according to Japanese emigration agents.[10] By 1899, the five companies had organized as the Japanese Immigration Bureau to streamline the process of recruiting laborers. Plantations ordered contract laborers from the bureau, which supplied workers by the lot.[11] The system was supposed to rationalize the process of supplying labor, but workers had their own reasons for migrating, which contrasted sharply with haole planters' visions for a cheap and docile labor force.

[9] Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors," 328; Masakazu Iwata, "The Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture," *Agricultural History* 36 no. 1 (January 1962): 28.
[10] Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 24.
[11] Geo. C. Potter, Dept. of Foreign Affairs to H. Hackfeld & Co., April 5, 1899, Oahu Sugar Company (OSC) 5/4 HSPA Records.

Mobility as a means of resistance to Hawaii's plantation regime was nearly as old as the islands' plantation system itself. Prior to annexation, workers resisted the disciplinary regime of the plantation by deserting the employers that held their contracts, risking far more than lost wages in doing so. Despite certain protections for workers within the law—masters were legally barred from enacting corporal punishment upon workers, for instance—any worker seeking to make a complaint against his master would have to leave the plantation in violation of his contract to appear before a police magistrate, with the violation subjecting the worker to criminal punishment, including imprisonment and an extended term of service. If a worker did make a complaint, he faced a magistrate who was himself likely to be a planter who employed contract workers and sympathized with other planters. Still, despite the considerable risks, workers protested abusive working conditions by the most effective means at their disposal—withdrawing their labor. After 1876, when labor importations began to expand dramatically with the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty, thousands of workers were arrested for desertion under the Masters and Servants Act each year. In 1892, workers violating the law accounted for more than a third of all arrests made in the kingdom.[12]

So frequent were desertions that planters wrote insurance provisions into their contracts with labor suppliers. The following contract, between an unnamed plantation and "Hiros Natsugoro and wife," who were cosigned by the Japanese Immigration Bureau, was typical. By the terms of the contract, Hiros Natsugoro was to be paid $15.00 per month, and his wife, $10.00. A month's work comprised 26 days of work at ten hours per day in the field or twelve hours in the sugar mill. Of this monthly wage, $2.50 per month was to be retained by the planter and turned over to the Japanese Immigration Bureau, "and be held by the bureau as trustee, for

[12] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 48, 50-57; Jung, *Reworking Race*, 21-23.

the purpose of securing the said laborer his return passage."[13] Framed within the contract as a protection of worker interests, in reality wage withholdings acted as a disciplinary measure designed to dissuade workers from leaving plantations before fulfilling their contracts. The withholdings also served as a deposit to secure the value of the laborers themselves. In the event that a worker deserted the plantation, labor contracts stipulated that the Japanese Immigration Bureau would replace the worker or pay damages to the plantation. In a typical transaction, the Japanese Immigration Bureau issued a "refund" to H. Hackfeld and Co. on June 10, 1899, in the amount of $100.00, itemized as $35.00 for Higuchi Kyutaro and $65.00 for "Aryoshi Arakichi & wife," who deserted the plantation on January 17, 1899.[14]

As a matter of the mundane business of the plantation, planters' insurance of laborers signified the rationalized expression of the commodification of laboring bodies. Payouts for deserters, along with receipts for the monthly deposits of contract workers paid by the plantations to the bureau, appeared within the plantations' regular business correspondence nestled among communications regarding freight rates and equipment repairs. The abstraction of human bodies to values of race and gender that could be liquidated or replaced characterized the racialized system of accounting underlying Hawaii's plantation economy that, in turn, produced the racial differences on which the plantation labor regime was based. Japanese participation in this system divided along class lines: Japanese merchants and elites played a critical role in the contract system as labor brokers and agents who secured workers from local prefectures in Japan and arranged for their transportation to Hawai‘i. Desperate to curtail worker mobility, planters coordinated closely among themselves and with Japanese emigration companies operated

[13] "The Points at Issue," *Hawaiian Star*, June 20, 1900; Japanese Labor Contract, April 28, 1898, OSC 5/4, HSPA Records.
[14] Japanese Immigration Bureau to H. Hackfeld and Co., June 10, 1899 and June 20, 1899, OSC 5/4, HSPA Records.

through Japanese hotels in Hawai‘i. A sugar factor explained the process by which the HSPA contracted recent Japanese arrivals to Hawai‘i from the hotels: “The Association pays a commission for men recruited, one-half of which is disbursed on the recruiting and sending of the men to the plantation, and one-half after the laborers have performed three months work on the plantation, to which they are assigned.”[15] Such cooperation with Japanese merchants enabled the HSPA to exert a more indirect control over their workers, a combination of racialized surveillance and paternalistic management.[16]

The annexation of Hawai‘i opened new possibilities for workers to challenge planter authority by leaving the islands for the West Coast of the United States to escape plantation life altogether. The nullification of the 1850 Masters and Servants Act by the Hawaiian Organic Act in 1900 freed tens of thousands of plantation laborers from indentured servitude, precipitating a wave of strikes and worker organization, especially among the Japanese, who formed nearly three quarters of Hawaii’s plantation labor force on the eve of annexation.[17] No longer bound to punitive labor contracts that could be extended for such infractions as refusing to work, plantation workers organized a series of successful strikes to demand higher wages, better working and living conditions, and the removal of abusive overseers. More importantly, the ability to move freely across the spaces where the United States claimed sovereignty enabled workers to contest planter power by removing themselves and their labor completely from haole-dominated Hawai‘i. In the years following the Organic Act, thousands of Japanese plantation

[15] H. Hackfeld & Co. to E.K. Bull, manager, Oahu Sugar Company, September 28, 1906, OSC 1/24, HSPA Records.
[16] Gary Okihiro elaborates on the class divisions among Japanese in Hawai‘i in *Cane Fires*, 28; for a comprehensive study of the role of Japanese emigration companies in Hawai‘i, see Alan Takeo Moriyama, *Imingaisha: Japanese Emigration Companies and Hawaii, 1894-1908* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1985).
[17] Plantation labor statistics compiled from official HSPA reports in 1899 put the number of Japanese plantation workers at 25,644 out of a total plantation workforce of 35,987. Despite departures for the West Coast, expanded labor recruitment efforts after annexation brought the total number of Japanese plantation workers up to 27,537 out of a total 39,587 by 1901. *Thrum’s* (1905): 30.

workers left Hawai‘i for the West Coast. Annual departures from Hawai‘i peaked in 1906, when 11,047 Japanese men, and over 12,000 Japanese total, left Hawai‘i for the U.S. metropole. In the previous year, 1905, Japanese bound for the mainland numbered more than 10,000 at a time with the sugar plantation labor force totaled 44,949, of whom 28,030 were Japanese. From 1901 to 1907, an estimated 38,000 Japanese left Hawai‘i for the continental United States, challenging planters' authority over the plantation workforce.[18]

As laborers' departure from the islands disrupted Hawaiian planter authority, the rising numbers of Japanese on the West Coast fueled a growing anti-Japanese movement led by white labor groups and citizens organizations. In an effort to avoid diplomatic problems with the United States and a backlash against its citizens abroad, the Japanese government voluntarily stopped issuing passports to laborers bound for the continental United States from August 1900 to June 1902. But the Japanese government continued to issue passports for Hawai‘i, where labor remained in high demand, and the islands became a stopover through which Japanese laborers continued to migrate to California. From 1900 to 1910 California's Japanese population rose from 10,151 to 41,356.[19] Although the Japanese population remained below two percent of California's total population, their increased visibility sparked widespread reaction against Japanese immigration, including the formation of the Japanese Exclusion League in 1905, whose purpose was to demand stricter immigration laws. Alongside mainstream newspapers like the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the League pressured the San Francisco school board to segregate Japanese children in San Francisco public schools in 1906 and boycotted Japanese-owned businesses. In 1907 anti-Japanese sentiment erupted into violence targeting Japanese

[18] *First Report of the Board of Immigration to the Governor of the Territory of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Bulletin Publishing Co., 1907), 24; *Thrum's* (1907): 27; Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors," 333.
[19] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1910 Census, Vol. I: Population, General Report and Analysis* (Washington: Bureau of the Census, 1913), 170.

communities and businesses all along the West Coast, including riots in San Francisco, Bellingham, and Vancouver, B.C. That year, the United States and Japan signed the Gentlemen's Agreement, an attempt to ease growing tensions between the two states by restricting Japanese immigration. Under the terms of the agreement, President Theodore Roosevelt agreed not to pass exclusionary legislation targeting Japanese immigrants and persuaded the San Francisco School Board to rescind its segregation order. In exchange, the Japanese government stopped issuing passports to laborers bound for the continental United States and limited the number of passports issued to Hawai‘i to 200 per month. Additionally, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 589 on March 14, 1907 prohibiting Japanese and Koreans holding passports for Hawai‘i, Mexico, and Canada from entering the continental United States, closing the loophole that had enabled Uyehata's migration one year earlier.[20]

Despite the anti-Japanese racism in West Coast cities, the railroad and agricultural industries of the U.S. West continued to depend on migrant labor. As the Japanese government continued to issue passports bound for Hawai‘i, Japanese labor contractors from San Francisco and Seattle responded to the new emigration restrictions by sending agents to Hawai‘i. Those developments gave rise to an ancillary industry that brought Japanese workers the final leg of their transpacific voyages from Hawai‘i to the West Coast. Hotelkeepers and "runners"—recruiters allegedly sent by the hotelkeepers—it was reported, earned a commission from emigration agents for securing laborers on the West Coast, where labor was in high demand on railroads, farms, and in canneries.[21] The San Francisco-based Japanese Boardinghouse Keepers Association, organized in 1902 to recruit laborers from Hawai‘i, contracted an agreement with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company for reduced fares for groups of laborers bound for

[20] Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contracts," 327; "Retrospect for 1907," *Thrum's* (1907):172-173.
[21] Royal D. Mead, HSPA Labor Committee, to H. Hackfeld & Co., June 10, 1907, OSC 2/1, HSPA Records.

California. The Pacific Mail Steamships shared port facilities in Honolulu with the Toyo Kisen Kaisha, or Oriental Shipping Company, which owned the *American Maru* that brought Uyehata and thousands of other Japanese to Hawai‘i before they moved on to the West Coast. Sugar planters viewed the exodus of their labor force with alarm. Although workers who left for the West Coast were quickly replaced by new arrivals during these years, planters feared the possibility of the outright exclusion of Japanese workers since American Chinese exclusion laws had already cut off one potential labor source. Anxious to maintain a stable labor force, Hawaii's sugar planters sought to reestablish control by taking measures to curb worker mobility.[22]

In an effort to stanch the flow of workers from Hawaii's plantations, at the urging of the HSPA in 1905, the territorial legislature passed Act 57 requiring the licensing of emigration agents. The objective of the law, as discussed in the Hawai‘i State Senate, was to discourage the emigration of laborers "as it is dangerous to the industrial interests of the Territory to have people constantly encouraging and enticing the laboring classes away from the Territory into other States and Territories." As precedent for such a bill, the Senate pointed to common law in the U.S. South, where a bound labor force was also critical to the agricultural economy. But although targeting hotelkeepers may have slowed the activities of some labor agents in Hawai‘i, the criminalization of labor brokerage was insufficient to keep the workers themselves from exercising their freedom of movement. To address this possibility, planters deployed their extensive influence in the territorial government to discourage anyone looking to capitalize on workers' eagerness to leave Hawai‘i[23]

[22] E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation from the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes, 1867-1941* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1986), 62; Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors," 326-327, 333.
[23] *Third Legislature of the Territory of Hawaii, Journal of the Senate* (Honolulu: Bulletin Publishing Co., 1905), 418.

The first test of the new law involved three Japanese hotelkeepers in Honolulu accused of inducing laborers beyond the limits of the territory for the purpose of being employed, in violation of Act 57. On June 27, 1905, the *S. S. Stanley Dollar* arrived in Honolulu, where 800 Japanese laborers, drawn from plantations across Hawai‘i, waited in hotels to board the vessel bound for Tacoma and Seattle. The hotelkeepers, M. Yamashiro, M. Komeya, and T. Haramoto, were arrested that same day, charged with acting as emigration agents without the obtaining the $500 license required by Act 57.[24] Alongside the arrest of the hotelkeepers for alleged labor recruitment, the HSPA mobilized its allies in official positions to halt the *Stanley Dollar's* departure with the 800 laborers. Hawaii's District Attorney R. W. Breckons and Collector of Customs Edward R. Stackable denied the ship clearance papers on the grounds that it did not have the required license to carry passengers. They made their intervention after planters warned that if the ship's consignment of Japanese laborers were successful, local hotelkeepers and labor agents working with Japanese agents on the mainland would lead to a "wholesale exodus" of Japanese from Hawai‘i. The ship remained moored in Honolulu harbor for nearly three weeks until the federal government intervened on behalf of the Dollar Steamship Company, and ordered Stackable to grant the ship clearance. The *Stanley Dollar* finally set sail for the Pacific Northwest on July 15, and although the ship was eventually allowed to bring workers across the Pacific, the legal imbroglio stalled its departure, costing the company thousands of dollars in lost revenue.[25]

Another way the HSPA sought to deter emigration was by initiating lawsuits that were ostensibly on behalf of the workers, framing their obstruction of migration as paternal protection. As the hotelkeepers' case unfolded, Frank E. Thompson, an attorney closely affiliated with the

[24] "For Luring Laborers," *Hawaiian Gazette*, June 30, 1905; "To Check Exodus of Japanese Labor," *Hawaiian Star*, June 29, 1905.
[25] "Stanley Dollar Like Thirty Cents," *Hawaiian Star*, July 6, 1905; "Dollar Gets Clearance," *Hawaiian Star*, July 4, 1905; "Stanley Dollar Case is Decided," *Hawaiian Star*, August 29, 1905.

Big Five, brought 35 suits against the Dollar Steamship Company for Japanese workers claiming losses incurred while waiting for passage to the West Coast when the *Stanley Dollar* was detained in Honolulu. The workers reported that runners came to the plantations with promises of high wages in the Pacific Northwest. One plantation lost 200 workers after runners reportedly told them they could earn $60 a month in Washington state, far exceeding the $18 per month they earned in Hawai‘i. When Hawaii's customs agent prevented the ship from leaving, Thompson filed lawsuits against the Dollar Steamship Company for workers claiming lost wages while waiting for passage aboard the ship.[26] In another widely reported case in early 1906, a man identified as Saito was charged with working as a labor agent for a mainland employer. T. Takahashi, the complaining witness in the case, testified that Saito promised workers at Lahaina wages of $1.35 per day either in railroad work or raising beets, but it was clear that the territory's case against Saito aimed primarily at protecting the interests of planters. Private correspondence among the sugar factors regarding Saito's case revealed that the HSPA labor committee engaged Thompson to help the association stop laborers from leaving Hawai‘i, a fact which was widely presumed in local news coverage. Against strong objections from Saito's attorney, Thompson acted as the attorney representing the territory in the criminal case, giving the Big Five a direct voice in the territory's prosecution.[27]

Notwithstanding the HSPA's strong advocacy in the courtroom, the high profile cases against Saito and the hotelkeepers were ultimately dismissed for lack of evidence, doing little to discourage workers intent on going to California or Washington. In Saito's case, cross-examination revealed that the complaining witness did not understand the charges he had

[26] "Dollar Gets Clearance," *Hawaiian Star*, July 4, 1905.
[27] H. Hackfeld & Co. to E. K. Bull, Manager, Oahu Sugar Company, March 2, 1906, OSC 1/22, HSPA Records; "Gear Opens Attack in Court on Emigration Statute," *Evening Bulletin*, February 28, 1906; "Saito's Offer to Japanese," *Hawaiian Star*, March 12, 1906.

brought against the defendant, and indicated that a wealthy Japanese merchant may have pressured him into making the complaint. As indispensable middlemen in Hawaii's plantation labor regime, elite merchants amassed extraordinary fortunes trading in the human capital of Japanese workers and jealously guarded this position from outsiders like Saito. Like the sugar planters with whom they transacted a profitable business providing laborers, these Japanese merchant-labor brokers had a vested interest in controlling the mobility of individual workers. Unsanctioned labor recruitment not only cut into their business, but it also undermined their authority to act on behalf of the Japanese population in Hawai'i. Japanese labor brokers therefore had an interest in cooperating with sugar planters. But the promise of higher wages and the seemingly insatiable demand for labor in the rapidly developing economies of the western states continued to entice workers from Hawai'i and directly from Japan, fueling anti-Japanese sentiment across the Pacific.[28]

In the years following annexation, Japanese workers protested haole planter abuses by the most effective means at their disposal: by removing their labor to disrupt plantation production. More broadly, Japanese migration disrupted the project of white settler colonialism in Hawai'i. Not only did migration to California draw directly from Hawaii's plantation labor force, it elicited alarm among white Americans on the West Coast, who increasingly viewed Japanese immigration and the plantation labor regime as a racial threat. Ironically, it was a refusal to accept lower wages and inferior treatment that brought many Japanese across the Pacific in the first place. Until 1907, migration to the West Coast served as a key tactic in contesting haole planter power. With large-scale migration following the annexation of Hawai'i, however, Japanese workers confronted an exploitative migrant labor regime that was not just insular but

[28] "Notice," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, August 19, 1905; "Saito's Offer to Japanese," *Hawaiian Star*, March 12, 1906; "Emigrant Agent Gets Discharge," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 13, 1906.

imperial in scope. In the wake of the Gentlemen's Agreement, Japanese challenges to migrant labor exposed the deepening contradictions of agricultural development across the Pacific.

Japanese Struggles Against Migrant Labor

Across the U.S. empire, the social infrastructure of labor control reflected the different social and economic geographies within the U.S. domain. While Hawaii's sugar planters struggled to keep their Japanese workers moored to the plantations, on the West Coast, the tendency of Japanese to establish families and communities produced tensions with white residents, particularly in California. Whereas Hawaiian sugar planters used strategies like contract labor arrangements designed specifically to discourage worker mobility, California's farmers embraced Japanese workers precisely because of their mobility. The differences in cultivation and agricultural development account for the different attitudes toward labor. In Hawai‘i, where sugarcane required year-round cultivation, the demand for a more permanent labor force fostered planter paternalism. On the West Coast, by contrast, the labor demands for sugar beets and many of the other fruit and vegetable crops fluctuated during the year. Moreover, whereas a relatively small group of sugar planters had dominated and directed Hawaii's economic development since the 1850s, such intense cooperation and coordination was never likely on the West Coast, where farmers were dispersed over a vast landscape—California alone covered more than 100 million acres compared to roughly 4 million acres across all of the Hawaiian islands combined. Despite these differences, the ongoing colonization of both locales required a vast reserve of migrant workers. But just as the means of labor control adapted to the social organization and industrial demands of a specific locale, so too did resistance to those labor formations.

While migration to the West Coast had served as a means of disrupting haole planter domination in Hawai‘i, Japanese across the Pacific challenged the distinct yet interrelated labor regimes in ways that reflected the social and geographical circumstances they encountered. In Hawai‘i, Japanese workers fought their exploitation through collective action demanding higher wages and better working conditions. In California, Japanese resistance took a more subtle form. In an economic context that valued them for their mobility from one crop to another and a social environment that was increasingly hostile to them, Japanese subverted their marginalization by establishing families and asserting their autonomy as workers. These varied forms of resistance intensified and generated new facets of anti-Japanese racism that would ultimately be resolved with a new migrant labor formation.

In the 1910s, measures designed to prohibit the migration of Japanese laborers to the continental United States had the unintended effect of rendering the Japanese population on the West Coast more stable and organized. The Gentlemen's Agreement allowed the parents, wives, and children of Japanese already in the United States to join them. Faced with dim economic prospects in Japan and increased constraints on their mobility within the United States, Japanese migrants began laying foundations for a life in the United States, most importantly, by starting families. Because Japanese migrant workers had been overwhelmingly men and anti-miscegenation statutes restricted interracial unions, establishing a family typically involved marriage to a picture bride, a variation on a form of arranged marriage in Japan. This migration transformed the demographics of the Japanese population from one overwhelmingly made up of men to a far more balanced population of women and men. In Hawai‘i, where plantation agriculture dominated both economically and socially, picture brides were thought to exercise a stabilizing influence over their husbands, a much discussed strategy of planter control. Similarly,

white land owners in California's agricultural regions tolerated the presence of Japanese families, as their labor enabled them to maximize profits on lands leased or worked by Japanese. But unlike Hawai'i, which was dominated by the sugar industry, California's social structure left openings, however narrow, for Japanese migrants to carve out modest farms. In claiming their own space in the social and economic order of California agriculture, Japanese farmers defied the structures that relegated them to migrant labor.[29]

The demographic shift brought about by the restrictive immigration measures, oriented specifically around the formation of heteropatriarchal family units, engendered new labor and settlement patterns among the Japanese in California. Upon the arrival of his bride in 1915, Shinbei Uyehata was most likely working as a farm laborer. When Shinbei and Misao welcomed their first child, Roy, in December 1917, they lived in the small farming community of Blanco, just west of Salinas. There, in 1896, James Bardin, the son of a white settler from Mississippi, had been among the first farmers in the area to grow sugar beets under contract for Claus Spreckels's new factory. Just eight miles from what became, in 1899, the company town of Spreckels, California, Blanco was characterized by extensive holdings of sugar beets, barley, and potatoes cultivated by contract laborers like Shinbei.[30] By the time their second child, Lucille, was born in 1922, the Uyehata family's circumstances had changed. They were then living in the Santa Clara Valley, which had developed a niche in California's agricultural economy cultivating orchard fruits, berries, and vegetables. Since the 1880s, white land owners in the Santa Clara Valley had relied heavily upon migrant labor and tenant farmers from China and,

[29] Takaki, *Pau Hana*, 122; Cecilia Tsu, *Garden of the World: Asian Immigrants and the Making of Agriculture in California's Santa Clara Valley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 115-117.
[30] "A New Field Crop That Pays" *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* 17, no. 15 (October 10, 1896): 236 (hereafter cited as *LPSM*); Burton Anderson, *America's Salad Bowl: An Agricultural History of the Salinas Valley* (Salinas: Monterey County Historical Society, 2000), 24.

later, Japan to maximize the productivity of their large holdings. There, Uyehata contracted sharecropping agreements with farmers and produce companies in San Martin and Menlo Park before finally settling in Gilroy, where he established himself as a successful tenant farmer.[31]

Shinbei Uyehata's shift from wage laborer to quasi-autonomous family farmer was facilitated by the labor of his wife and children. As Roy Uyehata recalls of his childhood, his father sharecropped strawberries on two and half acres of land. Starting at the age of ten, Roy helped his father on the farm, rising at 5:30 in the morning to work in the strawberry field for a few hours before the school bus arrived and then returning to work after school each day.[32] The Uyehatas were part of a growing number of Japanese who moved from migrant labor to some form of sharecropping or leasing arrangement in the years following the Gentlemen's Agreement. Such leasing and sharecropping arrangements tended to benefit white farmers and land owners more than their Japanese lessees, but they provided a critical opening for Japanese farmers who were otherwise consigned to work as dependent wage laborers. Still, as Timothy Lukes and Gary Okihiro emphasize in their study of Japanese farmers and farm workers in the Santa Clara Valley, tenancy was just a step removed from migrant labor. Japanese movement into tenancy represented an ongoing struggle against the impermanence and dependency of migrant labor. Although they played a central role in developing the agricultural economy of the West, the ability for individuals like Uyehata to live as independent producers was contingent on both the willingness of local white land owners to tolerate their presence and broader political circumstances.[33]

[31] Uyehata interview, 534-536; for broader context see Timothy J. Lukes and Gary Y. Okihiro, *Japanese Legacy: Farming and Community Life in California's Santa Clara Valley* (Cupertino: California History Center, 1985), 19; Tsu, *Garden of the World*, 6-7.
[32] Uyehata interview, 535-539.
[33] Okihiro and Lukes, 31-32; Tsu, 29.

Japanese immigrants navigated the laws designed to exclude them to establish profitable farms and form families. By turning to family labor and forming ethnic cooperative relationships with one another, individuals like Shinbei Uyehata were able to lease and, in some cases, purchase larger and more profitable farms over time. Although the Japanese were typically relegated to marginal lands on formal or informal lease arrangements, the intensive cultivation practices they brought with them from Japan enabled farmers like Uyehata to coax enough melons, peas, and potatoes from the ground to support their growing families. Ironically, this method of farming more closely resembled the Jeffersonian ideal of the self-sufficient family farmer than the "factories in the fields" producing vast quantities of a single crop, which dominated California's agricultural fields. By surpassing racialized expectations, Japanese farmers contradicted civilizational discourses deployed to justify white racial dominance. Far from dismantling mainstream narratives about the racial inferiority of the Japanese, however, the visible successes of Japanese in West Coast agriculture instead generated new racist anxieties about the Japanese dominance of California agriculture, a new variation on the "yellow peril" discourse that fueled a renewed movement to exclude Japanese from both immigration and land ownership. White farmers became especially suspicious of Japanese farm workers as they received reports of the Oahu strike in 1909.[34]

While the Japanese on the West Coast resisted their marginalization within the socio-economic order by establishing farms and families, Japanese resistance to the haole planter regime in Hawai‘i took on different forms. While many boarded ships bound for California, others organized collectively to challenge planter power. Almost immediately after penal servitude was rendered illegal by the Hawaiian Organic Act, thousands of Japanese workers in

[34] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3876; Tsu, *Garden of the World*, 61.

Hawai‘i demanded the cancelation of their contracts made under the Masters and Servants Act. Hawaii's Commissioner of Labor reported that for a few days after the law took effect on June 14, 1900, practically all plantation work across the islands was "suspended." In an effort to project authority, the commissioner insisted that the work stoppage was not a strike but, "merely a pause, during which the laborers seemed to expect some sort of readjustment of their relations with their employers."[35] Belying the commissioner's equivocation, Japanese workers engaged in at least twenty organized "pauses" in 1900 to demand release from their contracts and renegotiate the terms of their employment.[36]

Because labor was nearly always in high demand, the mobility that resulted from the abolition of the Masters and Servants Act gave workers a greater degree of power over their lives, even if they stayed in Hawai‘i. For those who remained on Hawaiian plantations, the threat of mobility gave workers leverage against plantations to increase their wages and reduce the number of working days each month. In addition to seeking higher wages on other plantations, mobility enabled workers to escape disciplinary actions. A longstanding issue that was frequently discussed among planters was the problem of labor "poaching" from one plantation to another. Given the perpetual demand for workers and the paltry wages paid them, workers responded readily to rumors of higher wages on other plantations by picking up their possessions and leaving. Alleged incidents of labor poaching, in which a plantation sent "runners" to recruit workers from other plantations, bred resentment and conflict among plantation owners,

[35] Reclaiming their canceled contracts would enable workers to claim the fifteen percent of their wages that had been withheld from their pay under the terms of their contracts. *Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii*, 1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 18.

[36] One way that plantations controlled the mobility of workers on their plantations had been to withhold a portion of their earnings until the end of the contract term. Workers who failed to fulfill the contract would lose those wages, giving workers an incentive to stay, even under poor working conditions. At the time of annexation, those funds were held by the Japanese consul general. But even after the Organic Act made the contracts illegal, the consul general refused to pay individual workers the money they had accumulated without the presentation of their official contract, either canceled or fulfilled. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 120-121.

particularly if one plantation was left shorthanded. In this way, worker mobility exposed potential cracks in the planter aristocracy into which newly formed unions entered.[37]

Interplantation mobility complemented collective action, particularly among Japanese plantation workers. As Gary Okihrio has argued, with the elimination of penal contracts, Japanese workers increasingly saw themselves in class terms, and the series of strikes that erupted in the wake of the abolition of the Masters and Servants Act signaled the beginning of a new era of plantation labor organizing among Hawaii's Japanese workers. After the initial series of strikes in 1900, the intensity and extent of strikes increased. In 1904, over 1,300 Japanese workers struck the Waipahu sugar plantation on Oahu twice, both times demanding the removal of an abusive luna (overseer). That same year, nearly 1,200 Japanese workers went on strike on Oahu's Waialua plantation, followed by other large-scale strikes in Oahu and Maui in 1905 and 1906. In Waialua, workers timed the strike for immediately after the cane was cut, leaving cane stalks to potentially perish in the field before they could be processed into sugar.[38] The growing scale and sophisticated timing of the strikes, which culminated in the massive 1909 strike, underscored to planters the increasing collective power of their primary labor force.

Through the HSPA, planters responded to Japanese labor organization with a highly coordinated system of racialized surveillance, mobilizing extensive interplantation networks established under the Hawaiian Kingdom. Planters were deeply connected through intermarriage and business ties stretching back to the earliest plantations, forming an oligarchy that utilized its formal and informal associations, as well as its influence in Hawaii's government, to protect planter interests. They had formally cooperated to control wages and limit worker mobility since at least 1882 when they organized the Planters' Labor and Supply Company to import laborers.

[37] Ewa Plantation manager to A. Ahrens, Oahu Sugar Co., March 20, 1899, OSC 5/4, HSPA records.
[38] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 42-44.

Reorganized as the HSPA in 1895, over time the planters' organization evolved into a cooperative association that advanced Hawaiian sugar planters' interests more broadly through Hawaii's shifting socio-political environment. Collaboration among the planters meant setting uniform wage rates to prevent competition and establishing territory-wide networks of racialized surveillance.[39] As worker militancy increased after U.S. annexation, planters revived many of these efforts to counter Japanese labor organizing, including efforts to institute a passbook system that would monitor Japanese workers and to cooperate with territorial authorities to enforce vagrancy and eviction statutes.[40]

In addition to surveillance efforts, planters increasingly sought to undermine worker organizing through new forms of worker discipline. After annexation nullified penal labor contracts, Hawaiian plantation labor evolved into a dual system of day laborers paid a monthly wage and workers on long-term cultivation contracts. Under long-term contracts, laborers cultivated cane, then harvested and transported it to the mills, a process that lasted roughly two years. Under such contracts, plantations provided tools, seed, and fertilizer and advanced contractors wages for subsistence needs. Workers were paid upon fulfillment of the contract according the tonnage of cane produced and the prevailing market price of sugar set in New York. Paying workers according to output, rather than the number of days worked, was designed to discipline workers. Because contractors were paid according to the amount of cane they produced, this arrangement discouraged strikes and slowdowns, which could produce losses that would cut into their wages. In April 1909, the HSPA began actively promoting a broader use of

[39] "Resolution of the HSPA, January 23, 1899; Ewa Plantation manager to A. Ahrens, Oahu Sugar Co., March 20, 1899, OSC 5/4, HSPA records

[40] Passbooks were designed to indicate whether a worker had deserted an existing contract. Any indication that a worker had left a previous employer before completing the contract term would be considered blacklisted. However, the passbook system was generally ineffective, since plantations generally hired according to demand. Vagrancy law, coupled with eviction statutes, was more effective as a means of labor control. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 133.

the contract system across Hawaii's plantations, arguing that when all laborers had a direct interest in the result, they were less likely to slack off. On some plantations, the trustees observed, workers actually made higher wages on the contract system than they could have at the monthly rate, encouraging a "concentration of effort" that benefited worker and plantation alike. With this sort of incentive, contracts promised planters a greater degree of labor discipline without relying on harsh and exacting overseers, whose abuses united disaffected workers.[41]

Although Hawaii's planters had employed variations of the contract form since annexation, the widespread, systematic use of contracts emerged as a response to growing Japanese labor militancy after the Gentlemen's Agreement.[42] New limitations on Japanese immigration made it increasingly difficult for planters to maintain a reserve of labor to respond to strikers and deserters. The agreement produced a dramatic downturn in the number of Japanese arriving in Hawai'i. By 1909, the number of Japanese departing Hawai'i exceeded those arriving for the first time since annexation.[43] Those who remained grew increasingly assertive and organized for a greater share of the profits of their labor. In December 1908, Japanese businessmen and community leaders in Oahu formed the Higher Wages Association (HWA) to demand wages and working conditions that were on par with Portuguese and Puerto Rican laborers. The discriminatory wage system paid Japanese workers $18 per month, as compared to $22.50 for Portuguese and Puerto Ricans performing the same work. Additionally, the HWA complained that plantations provided Japanese workers with poorer living quarters than their better paid counterparts.[44]

[41] H. Hackfeld & Co. to E. K. Bull, April 9, 1909, OSC 2/12, HSPA Records; Takaki, *Pau Hana*, 84-85; Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 138-139.
[42] *Thrum's* (1909):170.
[43] The Governor of Hawai'i also comments on this in *Annual Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1912 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), 42-43; the Annual Reports also give the numbers of Japanese leaving for the "coast" vs. those leaving for the "Orient," presumably returning to Japan.
[44] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 46-49.

As Japanese workers rallied under the HWA's leadership in the coming months, Hawaii's sugar planters closed ranks in an effort to contain the threat posed by the Japanese organization. On March 24, 1909, a meeting of the trustees of the HSPA concluded that the contract system should be more generally adopted in plantation work to "offset" the HWA's influence. They sent a letter to all sugar plantation managers outlining their strategy, which involved getting as much work up to the point of the mill—planting, cultivating, stripping, and hauling the cane—onto a contract basis as quickly as possible. The HSPA trustees acknowledged that the "race differential" to which the HWA most strongly objected was an unjust system, but, they insisted, it was imperative that planters refuse to give into the HWA's demands. Few managers, they wrote, would object to a $2 per month raise that would bring Japanese workers to the same level as European laborers doing the same work. Doing so, however, risked establishing a precedent that would strengthen the HWA, making it a "formidable adversary to be always reckoned with, an embryo tyrant whose bidding will amount to an order."[45] The issue, then, was no mere question of wages, but a struggle over who would control Hawaii's labor force: the planters or the workers.

As tensions rose in the weeks leading to what would be, to that point, the largest strike in Hawaii's history, HSPA trustees encouraged planters to adopt the contract system more broadly. Doing so, the trustees advised, would enable them to appease their Japanese workers with a promise of higher wages while simultaneously cutting the HWA out of negotiations. Under a generalized contract system, planters would deal with laborers directly, undermining the authority of outside "agitators" like the HWA seeking to represent workers as a group. Although wage differences might persist under contracting, the trustees observed, because contracts were

[45] H. Hackfeld & Co. to E. K. Bull, April 9, 1909, OSC 2/12, HSPA Records.

made on an individual basis, such details would not be information that was readily obtained, in contrast to the "notoriously public knowledge based on the '$18.00 per month' hue and cry."Workers were easily mobilized around the issue of discriminatory wages; contracts masked the difference, even as it disciplined workers to labor diligently in the hope of higher returns. But as many workers were already discovering in the spring of 1909, contracts did not guarantee higher wages, no matter how industrious the worker.[46]

The benefits of contract labor accrued almost entirely to the plantations, while the losses bore down most heavily on workers. Unlike day laborers who earned a monthly pay, contract workers were subject to the whims of the market and unforeseeable weather conditions, both of which could wipe out the potential profits from a crop. Under this labor arrangement, contract workers, who assumed the greater risk, often came away with the lowest wages. Even in years with optimal prices and weather conditions, many contract workers ended up with little or no profit after accounting for deductions from advances from their employers. When the massive, island-wide strike erupted on O'ahu on May 9, 1909, the walkout on at least one plantation was precipitated by contract workers who earned less than the prevailing wage rate for day laborers. The strategy of transforming plantation hands into economic partners motivated by self-interest could not dismantle the class consciousness that had developed among Japanese workers over three decades as Hawaii's plantation labor force.[47]

Despite planters' efforts to contract with a critical mass of their workforce, in the months leading up to the 1909 strike non-contract Japanese day laborers remained the overwhelming majority of Hawaii's plantation labor force, and as before, rumors of higher wages with another sugar company could encourage dozens of workers from a single plantation to abandon their

[46] H. Hackfeld & Co. to E. K. Bull, April 9, 1909, OSC 2/12, HSPA Records.
[47] Theo. H. Davies Co. to George C. McCubbins, December 3, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.

employers in search of better pay. Runners sent by contractors from one plantation to another to recruit laborers remained a particularly vexing problem for planters. This unrestrained movement of workers bred resentment among planters who found themselves unexpectedly shorthanded. Amid rising tensions between planters and the HWA in January 1909, the local planters' association on the island of Hawai‘i lodged a complaint with the HSPA, not against the Japanese organization, but against another plantation, the Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company on Maui administered by the Big Five corporation, Alexander & Baldwin. The complaint stated that a harvesting contractor employed by the company had sent a "runner" to solicit laborers from Hawai‘i in violation of HSPA regulations that strictly barred the practice. As a result, the complaint alleged, between 80 and 90 Japanese left for the Hawaiian Commercial's Pu‘unene plantation on a steamer that departed on January 11. Contracts, far from discouraging worker desertion, instead created a new class of individuals interested in acquiring laborers whose interests competed with those of plantation managers.[48]

While the Japanese workforce was bifurcated between contract and day workers, it was increasingly united under class terms, particularly as the 1909 strike unfolded as a class conflict between planters and laborers.[49] Contractors and wage laborers alike participated in the strike that raged across O‘ahu in 1909, with Japanese workers in all the islands supporting the HWA-led effort. According to HSPA intelligence, the HWA had collected $20,000 toward a strike fund as of June 1, 1909, with contributions flowing in from across the islands. F. M. Swanzy, director of the sugar agent Theo. H. Davies & Co., reported a rumor that Japanese struck specific plantations strategically and sought work at other plantations to continue funding the strike.

[48] F. F. Baldwin, Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Co. to William Pullar, Hawaii Planters' Association, January 22, 1909, LSC 21/6, HSPA Records and other letters in series.
[49] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 60.

Strikers were observed leaving O‘ahu to seek work on other islands in groups of twenty to thirty, and as many as one hundred. By honoring the strike against specific plantations, Japanese plantation workers demonstrated a level of cooperation and commitment capable of challenging haole planter dominance.[50]

Planters responded to the strike as a united front. The day after the strike commenced, the HSPA passed a resolution to insure plantations any damages sustained as a result of the strike. With these assurances in place, planters were expected to adhere to HSPA policy in dealing with striking workers, which included refraining from hiring any new Japanese workers for the duration of the strike. Although the strike was restricted to plantations on O‘ahu, the HSPA’s moratorium on hiring new Japanese workers extended to all of the islands when it was reported the strikers were traveling to plantations on other islands. Plantation managers on the island of Hawai‘i were therefore urged to keep careful watch to keep contractors from employing any new workers who might be providing material aid to strikers on O‘ahu. They went so far as to consider a measure independently of the HSPA that would shut down all the plantations completely to prevent workers from providing aid to the O‘ahu strike. Although the measure was never adopted, its consideration reflected the serious threat the strike posed to the shared class interests of the planters across the islands.[51]

Ultimately, the HWA-led strike collapsed against the weight of a well organized and heavily funded group of planters determined to contain the influence of the union. But the strike ended in something of a stalemate: although planters successfully weathered the challenge posed by the HWA, the coordination and resolve of the Japanese workers who walked out on strike demonstrated their capacity for effective organization. Hoping to avoid future conflicts, the

[50] Theo. H. Davies to George McCubbins, May 11, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.
[51] Theo. H. Davies to George McCubbins, May 17, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.

HSPA raised wages and began addressing housing and other issues raised by the HWA after the organization had been dismantled. Spread across vastly different landscapes, the Japanese in Hawai‘i and on the West Coast adapted their struggles against the social and economic hierarchy to the landscapes they occupied. Through family formation on the West Coast and collective action in Hawai‘i, Japanese workers disrupted the distinct, yet interrelated, projects of white settler colonialism across the Pacific. This resistance, and the varying facets of anti-Japanese racism it generated, unfolded alongside a national debate over labor, empire, and the consolidation of capital in the early twentieth century.

Consolidating Capital

The increased visibility of Japanese and their growing families settling in West Coast communities and organizing across Hawaiian plantations entered into ongoing national conversations about U.S. imperial power, trade, and economic development. The successive Republican administrations of Presidents McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft embraced the seemingly contradictory impulses of economic protectionism and territorial expansionism, raising tariffs to protect American producers from foreign competition while bringing Hawai‘i and the former Spanish colonies of the Pacific and the Caribbean within tariff walls. Labor leaders and politicians who represented constituents in the burgeoning beet sugar industry objected to U.S. expansion, particularly in Hawai‘i, on the grounds that incorporating the islands would force American workers to compete with the islands’ overwhelmingly non-white labor force who, they argued, were already undermining the American standard of living as cheap contract labor. In the debates over tariffs and incorporation, anti-imperialists and others opposed to lowering tariffs on insular sugar invoked the humble beet farmer as the classic model of white,

citizen labor and republican ideals of self-sufficiency, a contrast to cane plantations, which they connected to oligarchy and foreign labor, ostensibly antithetical to American ideals. But widespread ideas about a "yellow peril" obscured a much greater threat to independent producers and competition: an ever-increasing consolidation of capital by a highly coordinated oligopoly that controlled U.S. sugar production.

Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, massive corporate consolidations fundamentally restructured the U.S. economy. Industrialization and the rise of big business in the closed off traditional avenues of economic mobility for European immigrants and U.S.-born white people in skilled trades and small business ownership, and the republican ideal of self-sufficiency became increasingly elusive to white workers. Emblematic of these broader economic shifts was the Sugar Trust, dominated by the powerful American Sugar Refining Company (ASRC). As late as the 1880s, sugar refining was a competitive and highly localized industry. That began to change in 1887, when eighteen of the 23 sugar refineries on the East Coast joined in a trust under the leadership of Henry Osborne Havemeyer. The original sugar refining trust, reorganized as the American Sugar Refining Company in 1891, controlled the majority of cane sugar refining east of the Rockies. But Havemeyer's ambitions extended farther west. Shortly after the trust's formation in 1887, he attempted to bring Claus Spreckels and his massive sugar interests in California and Hawai‘i into the combination. Spreckels, who then dominated sugar refining on the West Coast, refused Havemeyer's overtures, sparking a price and turf war between the two sugar giants. The competition ended in 1891 with an agreement that gave the two former rivals equal interests in the newly formed Western Sugar Refining Company, which combined Spreckels's California refinery with the ASRC's recently established

West Coast interests. The combination assured the ASRC's place in West Coast sugar production as well as the monopolization of cane sugar refining from coast to coast.[52]

The establishment of the sugar trust and coastal rivalry between Havemeyer and Spreckels initially concerned only the refining of cane sugar. In the 1890s beet sugar boosters like Oxnard and Spreckels upheld beet sugar as an alternative to the monopolistic tendencies in cane sugar production. But as early as 1901, in response to inroads made by independent beet sugar producers in local markets, the ASRC began acquiring interests in beet sugar factories across the United States. By 1907 the sugar trust held a controlling interest in most of the large U.S. beet sugar companies.[53] With this level of control, Havemeyer and the ASRC dictated the wholesale price of sugar for the entire domestic sugar industry, ensuring that beet and refined cane sugar maintained a uniform price. U.S. consumers had grown increasingly hostile to trusts in the first decade of the twentieth century. The power of the ASRC to control the price of a staple commodity sparked outrage. In 1910 the United States House of Representative assembled a special committee to investigate the ASRC together with 30 other corporations and 39 individuals, including Claus Spreckels's sons and successors John D. and Adolph B. Spreckels, the Western Sugar Refining Company, Henry T. Oxnard, and others, collectively referred to in popular media as the Sugar Trust.[54]

Although the primary purpose of the investigation was to determine whether the ASRC and its affiliates violated the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, the hearings also raised questions

[52] In the 1870s, sugar refining was still a small, localized and competitive industry; in 1878, 38 independent refineries, including the Oxnard Brothers refinery in Brooklyn, operated in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, refining raw sugars from Louisiana and the Caribbean to supply local markets. But the instability of competition and falling profit margins brought the east coast refiners together to form a combination in 1887 to curtail the production of refined sugar and control prices. The trust was soon joined by refiners in Louisiana and new refineries in the midwest. Alfred S. Eichner, *The Emergence of Oligopoly: Sugar Refining as a Case Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 70-92.
[53] Eichner, *The Emergence of Oligopoly*, 248.
[54] "Government Moves to End Sugar Trust," *New York Tribune*, November 29, 1910.

about protective tariffs and foreign workers in sugar production. The antitrust investigation dovetailed with a national movement of wholesale grocers and independent sugar refiners (those not affiliated with the Trust) who charged that the tariff fell far short of its purported objective to support domestic farmers, and instead consolidated the Sugar Trust's already formidable position in the market.[55] The high price of imported raw sugar made competing with the ASRC nearly impossible. And the Trust's advantages went beyond its ability to control prices. By the time the hearings got underway, the ASRC had expanded horizontally to control vast resources of raw sugar in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Hawai'i, all of which were exempt from the tariff, giving them a commanding advantage over independent refiners forced to purchase raw sugar at a higher price. Recognizing, moreover, the ASRC's extensive involvement in U.S. beet sugar, wholesalers and independent refiners opposed to the Trust drew attention to domestic sugar beet farmers' dependence on "foreign labor" to undermine the argument that the tariff protected domestic farmers.[56]

The entangled questions of protective sugar tariffs and foreign labor featured prominently in the antitrust hearings whenever farmers and businessmen connected to beet sugar testified. Representative John E. Raker of California, the most strident voice behind that line of questioning, asked why tariffs were necessary to keep domestically produced beet sugar competitive with sugar produced overseas given beet sugar's reliance on foreign labor. To John D. Spreckels, who carried the mantle of the vast Spreckels empire after Claus Spreckels's death in 1908, Raker asked, "Would not they produce it just as cheap in California and the West, with

[55] In a case of intense sibling rivalry, Claus A. Spreckels, son of the Hawaiian Sugar King and brother of John and Adolph, sent the circulars around to the various grocers' associations. The younger Claus Spreckels had split from the family's Hawaiian and California sugar interests and operated an independent east coast sugar refinery. *Hardwick Hearings* 1: 962.

[56] In addition to John and Adolph Spreckels's Hawaiian cane sugar interests, the ASRC had extensive cane sugar interests in Cuba and Puerto Rico, giving them a commanding advantage over independent refiners, whom the tariff affected more. *Hardwick Hearings*, 1:438; Eichner, *The Emergence of Oligopoly*, 309.

this Chinese and Japanese and Hindu labor there, as they could by using the same kind of labor in the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines? What is the difference?"[57] In response, Spreckels acknowledged that the field labor was mostly Japanese. However, he continued, Japanese field labor was necessary to create more lucrative factory jobs for white men; removing the tariff on sugar meant eliminating lucrative work in sugar beet factories: "If we do not have the Japs to do the field labor, we would be in a bad fix, because you know American labor will not go into the field, and then they would not be producing the product that is requisite to run the factories. There would not be any factories. The factory gives employment to the white people only."[58] Non-citizen labor, he argued, was necessary for the creation of white middle-class employment.

Raker, a Democrat who had recently been elected to the House of Representatives on a platform that included support "for the exclusion of all Asiatic laborers and other undesirables,"made his attitude toward Asian labor in California clear as he questioned Spreckels about the tariff.[59] He stated unequivocally:

> I say that the fruit growers and the men in California can get along ten times better without the Japanese and Chinese, if they they would keep them out, instead of allowing them to come into our country and drive out our white men and white women, because we can not live without them. They will starve us to it, and the white man and the white girl will not go into the field with the Jap. If we would keep them out of California, we would have white labor there or good foreign labor, Germans and Swiss and Italians, to do our work and build up our homes and make our schools and upbuild our churches.[60]

Raker repeatedly invoked the racist trope that "foreign" labor, and particularly Japanese labor, undermined American working standards, asking such questions as, "Is it not a fact that that kind and character of labor competing with the American people is a disadvantage, even if it adds a

[57] *Hardwick Hearings*, 1:956.
[58] *Hardwick Hearings* (1911), 1:958.
[59] "Democratic Platform," *Amador Ledger*, September 2, 1910.
[60] *Hardwick Hearings*, 1:963.

little more to the perquisites of the man who handles the business, in the long run?"[61] What was at stake in the outcome of these hearings for Raker was no less than the welfare of the nation understood in explicitly racial terms. Throughout the hearings, Raker's questioning reveals slippages between "white" and "American," European and potential "citizen." Raker was not opposed to bringing in "foreign" labor, indeed, he supported bringing in "good foreign labor, Germans and Swiss and Italians," who would become American citizens instead of people whom he later in the hearings referred to as "others who can not become American citizens because of their nonassimilation with the American race."[62]

By directing the focus of the hearings onto labor practices in sugar beet production, Raker forged a connection between deeply unpopular corporate monopolies and white anxieties over Japanese immigration. Against the implications in Raker's line of questions, however, beet farmers and the owners of beet sugar factories, maintained that foreign labor did not compete with "American" labor since white folks refused to engage in the physically demanding manual labor of cultivation "at any price."[63] To the contrary, they argued, workers from Japan, Mexico, and India allowed for the greater capitalization of land, creating new and expanded possibilities for white Americans and European immigrants to extract value from the land. Sugar beet was particularly promising in this regard because it flourished in cheap, marginal soils and yielded high returns. W. T. Newland, a sugar beet farmer from Huntington Beach, California, testified that over a period of ten years beet cultivation had driven up the market value of land. "[G]ood beet land" that might have sold for $100 per acre in 1902, he said, sold for three to five hundred dollars per acre in 1912. Newland had been selected by the Southern California Beet Growers'

[61] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3886.
[62] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3887.
[63] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3880.

Association to represent the interests of sugar beet farmers, who were particularly concerned with how the hearings on the sugar trust might affect the tariff question. Asked whether the domestic production of sugar was a "good thing," Newland replied: "I am only a common farmer, and I only went to school about three months in my life." Yet despite his modest beginnings and minimal education, in just ten years, the "common farmer" attested that he had carved out a comfortable life for himself, the owner of 500 acres of lucrative sugar beet fields.[64] Across southern California, he testified, farmers like him transformed what had been, just a few years earlier, "a swamp and a wilderness" to productive and valuable lands.[65]

Behind the creation of value in the land was an army of seasonal workers, initially composed of Chinese and Japanese workers brokered by labor contractors. Seasonal workers brought both prosperity and conflict to communities up and down the state of California. In the Salinas Valley, where Uyehata labored in the beet fields, the Japanese population grew along with the valley's flourishing agricultural economy. With the construction of Spreckels's beet sugar factory in Salinas, farmers turned thousands of acres of Monterey County farm land to the production of sugar beets. By 1909, 9,900 acres of the Salinas Valley turned out 126,397 ton of sugar beets and continued to expand over the following decade that mirrored changes in other counties with beet sugar factories. The Japanese population, not counting the seasonal workers, rose from 710 to 1,121 during the same time period, a pace of growth surpassed only by the county's white population.[66] Far more elusive were the numbers of migrant workers who stayed only as long as it took to fulfill some aspect of the preparation, cultivation, and harvest of crops,

[64] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3863-3864
[65] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3883
[66] Statewide, roughly 80,000 acres of sugar beet farms turned out about 850,000 tons of sugar beets in 1909 and surpassed 100,000 acres and 1 million tons of beets two years later. "Supplement for California," in U.S. Census Bureau, *1910 Census*, 650-653; California State Board of Agriculture, *Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the California State Board of Agriculture for the Year 1912* (Sacramento: State Superintendent of Printing, 1913), 18-19, 86.

but farmers attested the importance of temporary workers. By 1910, Mexican workers formed the majority of the seasonal workforce in California, which grew each year with the expansion of sugar beets and vegetable crops. W. T. Newland estimated that in 1911 approximately 2,000 Mexicans descended on the tiny town of Huntington Beach, whose population was just 815 at the time of the 1910 census, to hoe, thin and top the beets.[67] For his own 500 acres, Newland hired "50 or 60 men" each year, of whom he estimated about four-fifths to be from Mexico and one fifth from Japan, who earned a wage of two dollars per day or worked on a contract rate to plant, thin, and harvest.[68]

The ability to call upon seasonal workers enabled farmers like Newland to reproduce a model of white American masculinity that had been threatened by industrialization. Historian Gail Bederman has observed that by the 1890s, social and economic changes had undermined Victorian ideals of manliness based on economic self-reliance and self-restraint. In response, she argues, between 1890 and 1917, white middle-class men actively worked to reinforce male power, in part, through strategies of racial dominance ranging from the disenfranchisement of African Americans to aggressive imperial expansion.[69] At a time when small-scale competitive capitalism had been eclipsed by corporate consolidation, migrant workers enabled farmers to act as independent, self-sustaining producers rather than supplicant wage laborers. Although they stood on the lower end of a vast power disparity, farmers insisted on approaching beet sugar factories—the only market for their produce—as equals in a business transaction. When asked

[67] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3876.
[68] Most hand labor was hired on a contract basis, the bulk of which was contracted into two periods, the first of which involved blocking, thinning, and hoeing, followed by the period of harvest, which involved pulling, topping, and hauling the beets. Often, a farmer would contract the same laborers for both. For the majority of sugar beet farmers, the available supply of labor to do the contract work defined the upper limit of acres that could be cultivated. "Farm Practice in Growing Sugar Beets in Three California Districts," U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin 760 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 37.
[69] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 20.

about the role of sugar refiners like the ASRC in the beet sugar industry, Newland replied that he knew nothing of it and that it was not his business. Also testifying on behalf of sugar beet farmers, Stephen Strong of Norwalk, California, cared little about the kind of profits factories yielded from the manufacture of sugar, stating: "The farmers, if you will let them alone, they will settle their own difficulties with the factories." Regardless of how they chose to present themselves before a committee of lawmakers, there was conflict between farmers and the factories, but when Newland, Strong, and other farmers did organize to demand higher rates from the beet sugar factories, they explained their protest not as a demand for a greater share of profits from the manufacture of sugar, but as a response to the rising cost of labor.[70]

In addition to freeing farmers from the degradations of wage slavery, the labor of a separate class of workers freed white farmers from emasculating "stoop labor," the "drudgery work" of agriculture. White men on beet farms typically did the work of preparing the fields—plowing and harrowing—but refused the "disagreeable" work of thinning, hoeing, and topping beets, which was contracted out to seasonal workers. As an expert described the process, it involved "crawling along the rows on their hands and knees." Because speed was the uppermost concern for workers paid by contract, many were careless and required close supervision.[71] Such work was acceptable as a transitory phase—Newland noted that in the summer months a handful of high school boys would work alongside the seasonal workers—but no wage was high enough to induce a white man to toil on bent knees. Instead, stoop labor continued to be associated with racialized workers: the black sharecropper, the Chinese "coolie," the Japanese contract worker, and the Mexican peon.[72]

[70] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3873, 3896.
[71] W. W. Robbins and Charles Price, *Sugar-Beet Production in California* (Berkeley: College of Agriculture, University of California, 1936), 34.
[72] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3886.

The frenzied discussion about migrant labor reflected that the movement of capital reconfigured the boundary between "domestic" and "foreign," a contradiction of empire that was ultimately resolved by race. For Raker and others on the committee, the question of tariffs was fundamentally a question of whether "foreign" labor would produce sugar on American soil or on foreign soil. While racialized labor enabled the reproduction of white masculinity on rural farms, urban-based labor organizations perceived the same class of labor as a threat to their economic power, undermining white workers' ability to provide for their families and maintain a high American standard of living. In a brief titled *Japanese Immigration and Colonization* prepared for the U.S. State Department, the Japanese Exclusion League of California reported: "The Japanese possess superior advantages in economic competition, partly because of racial characteristics, thrift, industry, low standards of living, general use of women as laborers, regardless of their condition as prospective mothers, and prevalence of child labor." The brief continued to claim that Japanese immigrants exploited these advantages to enact a "peaceful penetration" of the United States, in which Japanese immigrants "first supplant white labor by working for less money or longer hours than would the whites; then, having driven out white competitors, to raise the rate of wage until it is as high or higher than that asked for by white labor." The Japanese, according to the Japanese Exclusion League, threatened white manhood to advance "civilization."[73]

In the investigations into the sugar trust, Representative Raker voiced a particular objection that beet farmers did not make a sufficient effort to hire labor of the desirable "kind and class of citizenship." Of W. T. Newland he asked, "Is it not more important for this Government to give some consideration to advancing that kind of manhood and improving our

[73] V. S. McClatchey, *Japanese Immigration and Colonization: A Brief Prepared for Consideration of the State Department*, October 1, 1921 (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1970), 53.

citizenship?" Newland responded unequivocally: "I am with you. Send me 50, commencing in March, and there will not be a Mexican on the ranch; but if you can not get him, I have got to have the Mexicans."[74] On the question of labor, the migrant worker—marked by race and perpetually foreign in the American imaginary—manifested the divergent interests of a beet farmers and political elites.

Ultimately, the argument for greater protection of beet sugar that surfaced in the sugar trust hearings lost out. In 1913 Congress passed the Underwood-Simmons Act, which lowered tariff rates, including the tariff on sugar. Despite the fear of competition, the beet sugar industry, as well as domestic cane sugar, continued to prosper and expand over the next several years, having been given a particular boost with the disruption of sugar production in Europe during World War I. At the same time, farmers increased their dependence on migrant workers, as wartime industries offered more lucrative employment for white workers, and white land owners distanced themselves from the day-to-day business of farming. That context created an opening for Japanese farmers who moved in to work farms on a cash lease or sharecropping arrangement. But as wartime employment came to an end, the price of sugar dropped, having a pronounced effect in California, which grew more than one-fifth of the total beet sugar acreage in the United States. By the end of the decade, California's beet sugar industry went through a period of consolidation and decline. After 1921, beet sugar production in California began to fall, with some companies moving their operations to the inland West, places like Idaho and Colorado, and others closing down completely. As market trends shifted and industries contracted, Japanese tenant farmers became the subjects of two separate campaigns for exclusion in 1913 and 1920.[75]

[74] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4:3887.
[75] "Farm Practice in Growing Sugar Beets in Three California Districts," 6; *Facts About Sugar* vol. 10 (1920): 7.

Resolving Race, Migration, and Empire

As congressional investigations into the sugar trust continued, the anti-Japanese movement shifted course to target Japanese land use and ownership. In California, this movement culminated in the Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920, which prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship"—indirectly targeting the Japanese—from owning or holding long-term leases on agricultural land. Similar laws were passed in Oregon and Washington between 1921 and 1923. The new legislation reflected white anxieties about the permanent settlement of Japanese in their communities. The effect, if not the explicit goal, of California's Alien Land Laws, was to relegate Japanese farmers to the status of laborers. As struggles over land ownership unfolded on the West Coast during the 1910s, Hawaiian sugar planters countered Japanese worker resistance by replacing the Japanese with new migrant laborers. Across the varied land and labor contexts of the Pacific, Alien Land Laws and Filipino labor recruitment both emerged as means of resolving the contradictions of race, migration and empire.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Japanese farm workers played a significant role in the ongoing agricultural development of California. Through most of the nineteenth century, much of what would become the agricultural lands of the state were given over to ranching and bonanza crops like wheat, which required a relatively small labor input and produced quick profits until a glut in the market caused prices to fall. It was only with the introduction of migrant laborers, first from China, and later from Mexico and other parts of Asia, that California agriculture began to diversify late in the nineteenth century. With large numbers of workers willing to engage in the grueling work of manual labor, as well as massive capital investments in irrigation and transportation, new varieties of fruits and vegetables sprang from the rich alluvial soils of California's Central Valley. As Japanese farm workers moved from

contract labor to tenant farming, they brought new crops to the region, including berries and vegetable crops that were not profitable on larger, industrial farms, but provided a viable alternative for skilled Japanese farmers seeking to escape the degradations of wage labor. By 1911, many of the Japanese in the beet fields had been replaced by migrants from Mexico. Several white farmers described Mexican labor as less objectionable because proximity to Mexico and the tendency of Mexican workers to "follow the seasons" meant that they never stayed long in communities. A farmer explained of his seasonal labor force: "I don't know where they go. That is the condition in our country."[76] Japanese independence, meanwhile, violated the racial norms that had reserved the privileges of property ownership to white people who, in turn, profited from racially subordinated labor. The Alien Land Laws sought to address that racial anomaly by eliminating the possibility of land ownership, rendering Issei farmers permanently dependent on white farmers.[77]

The expansion of the Japanese in agriculture in the early twentieth century intensified white fears about Japanese agricultural dominance. Many of the same voices that demanded Japanese exclusion and the segregation of Japanese schoolchildren just a few years earlier began rallying against Japanese land ownership. In 1913, attorneys Ulysses S. Webb and Francis J. Heney introduced a bill that would prohibit "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning or holding long-term leases on land in California. Although the Japanese were not explicitly identified, the law was written with the intention of excluding them. Writing in support of the law, Chester H. Rowell, a prominent figure in both the Republican and Progressive parties, warned of an impending Japanese "menace," cautioning that if action were not taken to prevent extensive landholdings, California would soon become like Hawai'i. The California State

[76] *Hardwick Hearings*, 4: 3877.
[77] Tsu, *Garden of the World*, 7-9.

Assembly voted overwhelmingly to pass the Webb-Heney bill on April 15, 1913. The effect, if not the purpose, of the law was to maintain "an adequate supply of hand workers be available to meet the demands of the producer." A 1924 study on the impact of the law reported, "The Alien Land Law has played its part in keeping this class of labor mobile."[78]

In Hawai'i, meanwhile, planters responded to Japanese labor organization by increasing their efforts to bring more workers under contract. On November 29, 1909 after the strike had ended, HSPA trustees adopted a resolution, including the provision that contracts should be extended to at least 60 percent of the labor force, observing: "one of the chief obstacles the Agitators met was the body of men who were working under contract and who had every reason, therefore, not to encourage a strike lest they lose their crops." HSPA trustees described contract work as the planters' greatest weapon against the HWA, the "Agitators." Planters understood controlling the mobility of Japanese workers as a partial solution to their "labor problem." But no amount of surveillance or social engineering could keep workers complacent for long.[79] If Hawaiian sugar production was to continue as it had, it would require a reimagination of the planation labor force as something other than cheap, exploitable workers.

Over time, the HSPA's recruitment of Filipino workers established a new framework for labor-intensive agriculture that reverberated across the Pacific, marking the emergence of a new imperial formation. In their recruitment of Filipino workers, the HSPA employed a discourse of benevolent intervention to justify the racial exploitation of a migrant labor force, particularly in the face of opposition from white working groups and western politicians seeking to exclude Asian immigrants. Drawn from the civilizing discourse of colonization, the HSPA presented

[78] N. T. Nowell, "The Part Played by the Japanese in the Beet Sugar Industry," 24, Online Archive of California, Survey of Race Relations Records, Box 31, Folder 332.
[79] Theo. H. Davies Co. to George C. McCubbins, December 3, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.

plantation labor as a means of uplift, appealing to U.S. justifications of imperial expansion to mobilize colonized subjects, Filipinos, as a tractable labor force. The recruitment of Filipino workers to Hawai‘i, together with the passage of California’s Alien Land Laws, helped resolve the contradictions of the U.S. empire and the U.S. nation-state. Ultimately, containing Japanese mobility, recruiting new migrant workers, and promoting capitalist development in the Philippines cohered into a transpacific empire that rested on redrawing the “domestic” and the “foreign.”

The HSPA investigated the possibility of recruiting Filipinos as early as 1901. Annexation had not only nullified the penal labor contracts, resulting in higher wages, but had also meant the extension of the U.S. Chinese exclusion law to Hawai‘i. Eager to maintain a labor surplus, Hawaii’s sugar planters sought the assistance of the U.S. military and the Philippine Commission, the U.S. civil administration established to govern the Philippines in 1900. In 1901, the HSPA sent William Haywood, former United States Consul General to Hawai‘i, to Washington, D.C. as a representative of sugar interests seeking permission to recruit Filipino laborers to Hawai‘i. In a letter to Secretary of War Elihu Root, he wrote, “It is believed that labor of the kind required (excluding the Chinese) can be procured from the Philippine Islands, and of such labor the Sugar Planters desire to avail themselves.”[80] Although Root did not approve of sending large numbers of Filipinos to Hawai‘i, neither he nor William Howard Taft, then President of the Philippine Commission, saw any reason to restrict Filipino migration, as there seemed to be little interest among Filipinos. Apparently discouraged, the HSPA would not take up the subject of Filipino recruitment again until 1906.[81] But the association’s initial efforts met

[80] William Haywood to the Secretary of War, June 19, 1901 #3037-1, RG 350, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Mary Dorita, “Filipino Immigration to Hawaii” (MA thesis, University of Hawaii, 1954), 3-4.
[81] Secretary of War to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 11, 1911, #3037-25, RG 350, NARA.

with a lukewarm response from Secretary of War Elihu Root and William Howard Taft of the Philippine Commission and the effort was abandoned until mainland political pressure threatened to end the steady influx of migrant workers from Japan.[82]

Amid the confluence of rising pressure from Japanese workers for higher wages and increased competition in the sugar market, the HSPA sent Alfred F. Judd to the Philippines in 1906 to reinvestigate the possibility of Filipino labor recruitment. Judd's mission to the Philippines took place amid ongoing debates about the tariff on Philippine sugar. In hearings before the Senate Committee on the Philippines in January 1906, Hawaiian sugar planters complained that cheap labor in the Philippines posed a "menace" against which Hawaiian sugar planters could not compete. As a representative of the HSPA, Honolulu attorney Francis M. Hatch testified to the difficulty of getting any labor since annexation cut Hawaii's sugar planters off from Chinese labor, prompting Senator Henry Cabot Lodge to ask: "Why do you not draw labor from the Philippines to Hawaii?"[83] Although the senator's suggestion did not set Judd's Philippine mission in motion, the tariff debate was among the multitude of pressures that revived the HSPA's interest in the recruitment of Filipino workers.

As an agent of the HSPA, Judd spent eight months in the Philippines with the intention of recruiting 300 Filipino families to move to Hawai'i for a term of three years. Judd's efforts were met with a combination of derision and opposition from American and Filipino businessmen. Many Manila-based Americans, convinced of the innate laziness of Filipinos, mocked the idea of recruiting Filipinos to Hawai'i as workers, while the Manila Chamber of Commerce objected that laborers should remain in the Philippines to develop the resources of the islands. But not

[82] Secretary of War Jacob M. Dickinson to Secretary of Labor and Commerce Charles Nagel, 11 May 1911, #3037-35, RG 350, NARA.
[83] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Philippines, *Revenue for the Philippine Islands: Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines of the United States Senate* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 80.

everyone was prepared to dismiss the HSPA's efforts in the Philippines. In the American-run newspaper the *Manila American*, Judd's supporters in the Philippines wrote of his efforts: "It seems to us it would be an opportunity for the young and ambitious native to master modern methods in practical agricultural…Four or five years' experience on the Hawaiian plantations, if he be enterprising, would make him competent to return and apply his knowledge wisely to developing the resources of his native land."[84] At the same time that politicians like John Raker and white labor organizations and citizens groups employed a civilization discourse to dominate and exclude nonwhite workers from the United States, the same discourse was used to justify and promote the recruitment of Filipino labor.

George Bronson Rea, editor of the *Far Eastern Review* and strong supporter of free trade between the United States and the Philippines, seized upon the potential recruitment of Filipinos to Hawai'i as having the potential both to promote U.S. imperial objectives in the Philippines and solve Hawaii's "labor problem." In a letter to Secretary of War William Howard Taft written April 28, 1906, Rea laid out a blueprint for what would become the U.S. justification for labor migration as a project of benevolent intervention. Although Rea and the Hawaiian sugar planters stood on opposite sides of the tariff issue, Rea argued that Hawaii's labor demands could, with proper regulations, "be turned into profit for the future advancement of the Insular industry, and harmonize with the policy of the administration of the Philippines for the natives." While Hawai'i lacked labor, he explained, the Philippine sugar industry suffered from a lack of skilled labor and capital to invest in modern methods of production. A few thousand laborers drawn from the Philippines would meet Hawaii's labor demands without harming the productive capacity of the islands. Meanwhile, he continued, if certain provisions were attached to the

[84] "One Jolly for Judd," *Hawaiian Star*, June 27, 1906.

migration, it could redound to the benefit of Philippine uplift. For instance, he wrote, the Insular Government could sanction the exportation of a certain number of laborers on the condition that a percentage be given skilled training that could be brought back to the Philippines. The result would be that by the time tariffs on Philippine sugar were eliminated and capital thereby induced to invest in the Philippines, there would be a force of skilled workers eager to return to develop the newly modernized Philippine sugar industry.[85]

Rea imagined Hawai‘i labor migration as part of a broad vision to modernize the Philippine economy and uplift Filipinos. In this vision the "insular industry" brought Hawai‘i and the Philippines together through the movements of labor and capital. Unlike the earlier waves of Chinese and Japanese migrants brought to Hawai‘i solely for the profit of a sugar-planting oligarchy, Rea's vision promised the uplift of U.S. colonial wards, a fulfillment of the American mission of "benevolent assimilation." In seeking Filipino laborers, Hawaii's sugar planters professed a similar vision, stating that Filipinos, if placed in contact with a "higher plane of living," would acquire "habits of industry and thrift and develop into a good laborer."[86] But developing Filipinos into good laborers did not mean development into free and independent citizens. Rea observed: "Filipinos under contract would never get outside the cane fields, or out of the debt of the planters, and at the expiration of their contract they would still be of no value other than field hands."[87] The objectives of the planters and the U.S. goals of uplift and development were consistent with one another. When planters discussed racial uplift, they did not mean to elevate Filipinos to whiteness. Rather, their primary objective in recruiting Filipino labor was to maintain the racially stratified system of plantation labor that had made them so

[85] George Bronson Rea to the Secretary of War, April 28, 1906, #3037-4, RG 350, NARA.
[86] George Bronson Rea to Captain Frank McIntyre, April 29, 1906, #3037-5, RG 350, NARA.
[87] George Bronson Rea to the Secretary of War, April 28, 1906, #3037-4, RG 350, NARA.

wealthy. As of 1906, however, it was not clear that the Hawaii's Filipino labor experiment would ever get off the ground.

After the initial group of fifteen was brought to Hawai'i, agents of the HSPA persuaded only 150 Filipinos to go to work in Hawai'i. By 1908, *Thrum's Hawaiian Annual* declared the effort to procure Filipino laborers "abandoned, owing to the obstacles besetting the movement, and its expense." In the same report, however, were indications of planters' dissatisfaction with recently recruited Portuguese, and the increasingly complex "problem" of Japanese immigration. From 1906 to 1907, planters cooperated with Hawaii's Immigration Bureau to re-open the immigration of Portuguese and Russian families who would settle in Hawai'i as a permanent laboring class. The planters' goal in seeking laborers from all available sources was unambiguously to "maintain their ground at whatever cost and lessen their dependence on any race, as hitherto."[88] But planters were never fully committed to the settlement of European laborers. Like Japanese migrants, many European laborers found plantation work unsatisfactory and continued on to the West Coast. Moreover, as potential citizens who could own land and eventually vote, Portuguese and Russian settlers challenged the plantation hierarchy by establishing claims to the public lands sugar planters leased. The question of Filipino migration emerged again in that context.[89]

The 1909 O'ahu strike marked a definitive shift in Hawaii's labor relations, as the culmination of a decade of rising tensions between planters and Japanese workers that led to the large-scale recruitment of Filipinos and the reimagination of the Philippines as an inexhaustible source of reserve labor. Though the strike ultimately collapsed, planters remained wary of Japanese workers. A month after the strike's end in a letter to George McCubbin, manager of the

[88] *Thrum's* (1910):126-127.
[89] *Thrum's* (1908); 172.

Kaiwiki Sugar Company, F. M. Swanzy wrote: "The end of the strike does not mean the end of the trouble with Japanese labourers by any means…They appear humble now, but they are not so humble as they look and do not consider themselves beaten."[90] Indeed, for some planters, the strike was a "blessing in disguise" because it resulted in a movement that would, in time, "mean the end of Japanese domination of the labor situation and result in the introduction of men who will become citizens of the United States." Instead, they increasingly looked to the large-scale importation of Filipino workers who would take the place of Japanese at the bottom of the plantation labor hierarchy. In response, the HSPA set out to introduce "large numbers" of Filipinos as quickly as possible, on the conviction that new labor must be introduced to "offset" the Japanese.[91]

Conclusion

By 1912, Filipinos became the only laborers brought to Hawai'i by the HSPA. Although they were envisioned as a replacement for the Japanese, the terms under which they were brought to Hawai'i signaled a shift in the changed political circumstances. Filipinos entering Hawai'i were cast not merely as another population of cheap "Asiatic" labor, but as objects of uplift. The earlier concentration of Japanese workers in the sugar industry contributed to the "foreignness" of Hawai'i, but although Japanese workers remained the majority of plantation workers, in the wake of the strike Hawai'i was effectively recast after the strike as place upholding "American" habits of industry and democracy. In his 1912 Annual Report as Governor of Hawai'i, Walter F. Frear invoked the ideal of benevolent tutelage previously outlined by George Bronson Rea to justify Hawaii's importation of Filipino workers, writing:

[90] Theo. H. Davies to George McCubbins, August 16, 1909, LSC 47/1, HSPA Records.
[91] *Thrum's* (1910): 126-127

"The immigration may prove of benefit to the Philippines because of the industrial training which the immigrants will necessarily get in Hawaii and the chance that many of them thus trained may return to the Philippines."[92] The framing of the recruitment of Filipinos as migrant labor thus simultaneously countered the protests of white labor groups that was so central to the anti-Japanese movement and offered justification for American colonialism in the Philippines. The recruitment of migrant workers, moreover, helped to naturalize Hawai'i as a part of the United States, while the Philippines, as a backward colony of migrants in need of racial uplift, remained foreign, an object of "benevolent assimilation," not of incorporation or independence.

[92] *Annual Report of the Governor of Hawaii*, 1912, 46.

Chapter Five

Contesting Capital, Contesting Empire

Introduction

In 1907, the aging Papa Isio surrendered to American forces, ending the decades-long Babaylan peasant movement against the sugar hacenderos of Negros and colonial rule. A few years later, the Philippine Constabulary captured Felipe Salvador. Also known as Apo Ipe, Salvador was the leader of another peasant movement that had stymied American colonial officials in Luzon since 1901.[1] Papa Isio and Felipe Salvador were part of a broad-ranging peasant resistance dating to the Spanish period that combined millenarian elements with demands for a radical redistribution of lands among those who tilled the soil. These movements, which first became visible with the rise of commercial agricultural during the mid-nineteenth century, resisted the successive colonial regimes of Spain and the United States as well as the reorganization of the countryside into massive haciendas for the production of sugar, tobacco, and other colonial commodities. Many of these movements were eradicated by the military campaigns of the Philippine-American War, but Papa Isio and Felipe Salvador had continued to elude colonial authorities long after the war was declared over. Their captures seemed to bring to an end the last vestiges of agrarian resistance to the dual forces of U.S. colonial rule and capitalist development, signaling a new era of peace and prosperity in the Philippine

[1] After a years-long relentless manhunt by U.S. soldiers and the Philippine Constabulary, Papa Isio surrendered at the age of 68 after one last effort to incite a general uprising that would drive out the Americans. Felipe Salvador also evaded the Constabulary, aided by the support of his followers, until he was captured in 1910. His execution the following year was met with widespread anger and mourning, attesting his continued popularity. Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City: Tala Pub. Services, 1975); 272-275, 280; Jonathan Fast and Jim Richardson, *Roots of Dependency: Political and Economic Revolution in 19th Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1979), 111; David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 125.

countryside.[2] But the relative quiet that characterized the Philippine sugar lands over the following decade masked simmering tensions, as colonial economic development deepened longstanding social divisions between the peasantry and the landed elite.

World War I intensified the economic imbalance that had previously given rise to agrarian unrest, particularly in the sugar-producing regions of Pampanga and Negros. The establishment of free trade with the United States, correlating with the organization of transnational corporations for refining and marketing sugar, displaced growing numbers of Philippine peasants as land was further consolidated into the hands of Philippine sugar hacenderos for the production of sugarcane. In the aftermath of the war, secret peasant societies committed to eradicating exploitation in the countryside reappeared in Mindanao and the eastern Visayas, beginning around 1918. Known as Colorums, their followers adhered to strict disciplinary regimes organized around a religious doctrine that rejected private property. Colorum movements spread rapidly, arousing the suspicions of the Philippine Constabulary, a civilian police force organized by the U.S. colonial regime that was quick to act on rumors to violently repress peasant rebellions. In one incident, in January 1924, Constabulary troops attacked the small fishing village of Pamosaingan on Bucas Grande Island, provoking a major uprising that left dozens of Constabulary troops and more than 200 peasants dead. Many more suspected Colorums were placed in prison after the uprising.[3] On the island of Panay, a shopkeeper named Florencio Entrencherado garnered some 26,000 followers between 1925 and

[2] Constantino, *The Philippines*, 272, 280.

[3] The uprising began when some twenty Constabularies, acting on rumors of an imminent peasant uprising, set out on an expedition on the island of Bucas Grande, just off the northeastern coast of the island of Mindanao. They were met by 500 bolo-wielding peasants, reportedly Colorums, who left all but two dead, but not before the Constabularies' guns cut down 80 peasants in what has come to be called the "Pamosaingan massacre." The Philippine Constabulary responded with disproportionate force to crush the uprising by mid-February. By the time it was over, provincial records reported that the conflict claimed the lives of 37 Constabulary troops and 200 peasants, though local residents insisted that the latter number was much higher. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 142-154.

1926 with his message that the day of judgment would soon arrive, "when the poor will be ordered to kill all the rich." Infused with religious fervor, peasant movements across the Philippines mounted a vigorous opposition to the dispossession of land by speculators and absentee landlords. Common to these movements was a conviction that ending exploitation required immediate independence from the United States.[4]

While the landed elite accumulated land and political power in the Philippines, in Hawai'i, the Big Five sugar agencies consolidated control over the territory's land, economy, and government. At the initiative of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA), the acreage devoted to sugar production in Hawai'i had already doubled in the ten years following Hawaii's incorporation as a U.S. territory (from 128,000 acres in 1900 to 214,000 in 1910). Although expansion slowed, as most of land suitable for sugar cultivation had already been planted, favorable tariff legislation and growing efficiency in the increasingly centralized industry produced rapidly rising profits beginning with the outbreak of war in Europe and continuing long after the Treaty of Versailles.[5]

The growth and concentration of Hawaiian sugar production was made possible by the exploitation of a new labor source. As U.S. immigration laws heightened restrictions on the migration of workers from Asia over the course of the decade, Hawaii's sugar planters came to depend almost entirely on Filipino migration to meet plantation labor demands. As U.S. "nationals," Filipinos were legally allowed to immigrate to the incorporated regions of the United States during most of the American colonial period, and over the course of the decade, Filipino migration became a condition of possibility for the reproduction of Hawaii's plantation

[4] Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 167; Constantino, *The Philippines*, 357-358.
[5] Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985), 210-211.

system. Colonial development in the Philippines, therefore, enabled Hawai‘i to maintain its caste system under U.S. sovereignty. But Filipino migrants did more than address Hawaii's labor issues. The transpacific recruitment and migration of Filipino workers signaled the development of a new racial formation, one which enabled the reproduction and expansion of the U.S. empire in the twentieth century.

The emergence of the migrant worker as a U.S. imperial racial formation was a process that unfolded not in geographic isolation but through colonial development across the expanding U.S. empire. In the Philippines, the U.S. project of benevolent intervention brought capital and the state together to legitimize U.S. expansion through economic development and political modernization. This included the establishment of modern sugar refineries called centrals, which further encouraged the growth and consolidation of massive sugar haciendas.[6] Focused on export agriculture, this model of development increased social stratification within the Philippines and projected a racialized order upon the U.S. empire. In the Philippines, as elsewhere, technological advances in agricultural production encouraged further concentration of capital, generating a greater demand for manual labor to produce raw materials and casting newly dispossessed peoples onto an increasingly globalized labor market where, as "surplus labor," they became essential to modern productive regimes that demanded a cheap and flexible labor force. The HSPA's recruitment of Filipino workers remade those displaced by colonial development into beneficiaries of U.S. imperial benevolence: objects of charity rather than subjects entitled to representation.

Focusing on the connections between the different, but complementary, projects of U.S. colonial development in the Philippines and Hawai‘i, this chapter demonstrates how the

[6] Cleve W. Hines, Government of the Philippine Islands, Bureau of Agriculture, "Cane Production and Sugar Manufacture in the Philippines Islands," *Bulletin* 33 (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1919), 201.

movements of labor and capital naturalized Hawai‘i as a part of the United States and cast the Philippines and Filipinos as ineluctably “foreign,” even though both were colonies of the United States. But the same transpacific mobility that enabled HSPA recruitment in the Philippines also threatened to undermine planter control, as Filipinos migrated freely across the U.S. empire to seek alternatives beyond Hawai‘i. In doing so, they disrupted the racialized logics that structured the U.S. imperial formation across the Pacific. As migrant Filipinos resisted the disciplinary regime of colonial commodity production, they also exceeded the disciplinary efforts of Hawaii’s sugar planters and the U.S. colonial administration in the Philippines.

In refusing to be contained within the established channels of migration, Filipinos disrupted colonial logics of legitimation, or what historian Paul Kramer has called a “politics of recognition.” As Kramer explains it, the politics of recognition defines the relationship between a hegemon and subordinate, “not by the hegemon’s outright political exclusion of the less powerful but by its ability to establish and adjust standards or criteria for inclusion.”[7] According the logic of the politics of recognition, in the Philippines and other colonial settings, colonized peoples demonstrate their “assimilation” to the colonizers’ standards to gain access to power and resources. In doing so, however, they confirm a tacit acceptance of the imperial, racist, settler colonial dominance that asserted its prerogative to intervene in the first place. But Filipino migrants subverted the politics of recognition. Born and educated under the American flag, their transpacific migrations and subsequent labor organization reflected an assertion of their rights as subjects of the United States, not a pursuit of recognition as objects of uplift. Focusing on the transpacific migrations of Filipino workers amid U.S. economic development projects in the Philippines, this chapter illustrates how Filipino migrants exploited their rights as U.S.

[7] Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 18.

"nationals" to advance their own interests. By refusing the logics of empire and capital, migrant Filipinos ultimately challenged both.

HSPA Recruitment in the Philippines

Reporting on Hawaii's general social conditions in 1915, the U.S. Secretary of Labor unfurled the contradictions produced by U.S. expansion in the Pacific. Hawaii's plantation system, he explained, had developed around compulsory labor prior to annexation and under that system Hawai'i had become "orientalized." That system could not be maintained without new supplies of cheap labor, which, he continued, because of its cheapness, was "not only socially undesirable but in the end economically undesirable as well." And yet, he cautioned, the plantation system could not be abolished, "without checking for a long time to come the industrial prosperity of the country, and in that way probably setting back political development as well."[8] A racialized hierarchy of labor had become an ineradicable feature of Hawaii's social and economic system, generating tensions across the Pacific that fueled a growing anti-Asian movement on the West Coast and had already resulted in restrictions on Asian labor migration. At the same time, increasing organization among Japanese plantation workers threatened Hawaii's plantation system from within.

Across the expanding United States, the abolition of compulsory labor in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had destabilized an economy structured around what Cedric Robinson referred to as "racial capitalism." According to Robinson, race was an organizing principle underlying the development and expansion of the capitalist system.[9] In Hawai'i

[8] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Conditions in Hawaii: Letter from the Secretary of Labor Transmitting the Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor Statistics on Labor Conditions in the Territory of Hawaii for the year 1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 40.

[9] Robinson's concept of racial capitalism is based on the idea that from its earliest stages, capitalism leveraged race

specifically, the social structure that took shape after 1850 was organized around the racialized order of the sugar plantation and the coercive labor practices codified in the Masters and Servants Act. Incorporation as a U.S. territory not only nullified the Masters and Servants Act, but also generated protest from white Americans who feared that Hawai‘i would be a gateway for Asian immigrants seeking to enter the United States. Hawaii's sugar planters faced a paradox: incorporation as a U.S. territory ensured the viability of Hawaiian sugar in the U.S. market by bringing it permanently within U.S. tariff walls, but in doing so, it threatened the economic foundations of the Hawaii's political economy by subjecting its sugar planters to stricter labor laws and greater public scrutiny. Filipino labor recruitment emerged as a solution. As colonial subjects, Filipino migrants offered a new justification for the ongoing practice of recruiting racially marginalized labor. Seeking to reconcile the contradictions of a plantation labor regime within the democratic political system of the United States, the HSPA cast the transpacific traffic of Filipino workers within the broader project of colonial development and racial uplift.

Through its recruitment practices in the Philippines, the HSPA sought to reassert control over a labor recruitment process increasingly undercut by U.S. immigration laws and Japanese labor organizing. As the Japanese Higher Wages Association gained traction in late 1908 and early 1909, the HSPA sent Lucius Pinkham and Oswald Steven to the Philippines to establish offices in Manila and Cebu that would oversee labor recruitment. Over the following 25 years, more than 120,000 would migrate to Hawai‘i, most as recruits of the HSPA.[10] The majority of

and other uneven social formations. As a result, he argues, "The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology." Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 2.

[10] Roman R. Cariaga, *The Filipinos in Hawaii: Economic and Social Conditions, 1906-1936* (Honolulu: Filipino Public Relations Bureau, 1937), 1.

Filipinos recruited to Hawai‘i in 1909 and for the next several years came from the Visayas, a region transformed by colonial development into a plantation economy decades before the United States arrived.[11] Most Filipinos from the Visayas went through the HSPA's Cebu office, which was overseen by Oswald Steven. Steven was already acquainted with the Visayan islands when the HSPA hired him to establish a recruiting agency. In 1901 he investigated the conditions of the sugar industry in the Visayas for the Philippine Commission, which intended to establish a model sugar estate and experiment farm whose work was to be combined with an industrial school. Although the purpose of his investigation was to identify a suitable site for such an institution, Steven closed his report with the observation that the labor on the Philippine plantations was: "equal if not superior to the Japanese or Chinese employed as plantation labor in Hawaii."[12]

Building on this conviction and his extensive knowledge of the region, Steven made the Visayas the leading center of Philippine recruitment from 1909 to 1919, when recruitment from the Ilocos region of Luzon began to surpass that of the Visayas.[13] From his office in Cebu City, Steven dispatched Filipino sub-agents to provinces across the Visayan islands of Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, and Siquijor, avoiding the main sugar-producing island of Negros, where politically powerful sugar planters vigorously objected to the HSPA's recruiting activities. Paid a fee for each laborer accepted by the HSPA, sub-agents enticed potential recruits with exaggerated

[11] John A. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 5-6.
[12] Oswald A. Steven, "Report of Investigations in the Islands of Cebu and Negros with the view to the selection of a site for a model sugar estate," in *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War* part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 633-637 (hereafter *Report of the Philippine Commission*).
[13] Although the HSPA continued to recruit a large number of laborers from the Visayan region, by 1919, the province of Ilocos Norte sent more laborers than any other province, surpassing Cebu, which had previously sent the largest number of recruits. By 1924, a majority of all Filipino migrants came from the two provinces of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur. Bruno Lasker, *Filipino Immigration to the Continental United States and to Hawaii* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 167.

promises of high wages. From the regional office in Cebu, HSPA agents arranged workers' transportation from the provinces to the central office in Manila, where they received a medical evaluation and a new set of clothes, and awaited a steamer to bring them to Hawai'i.[14] As Steven likely knew from his earlier survey, Filipinos from the densely populated Visayan islands were already accustomed to labor migration. Many regularly traveled south to Mindanao to seek work in rubber, copra, and hemp plantations. Others found seasonal employment on the sugar haciendas on Negros and Panay as sakadas, migrant workers recruited for the peak cutting and planting seasons. The familiar cultural formation of the sakada translated easily to the HSPA's efforts in the Visayas, facilitating the recruitment of migrants bound for Hawai'i.[15]

The HSPA's recruitment practice, designed to procure the "ideal laborer," was also a process of making race; by determining who could traverse intercolonial barriers and under what conditions, the HSPA fostered the identification of Filipinos as somehow inherently disposed to plantation labor. Decades after their migration to Hawai'i, many Filipino migrants recalled the physical evaluations at the HSPA's offices in the Philippines. Prospective migrants were evaluated to ensure that they were healthy enough to work, specifically for their fitness as plantation laborers. A migrant described how HSPA agents in Cebu inspected everyone's hands: "What kind hand we get," they wanted to know.[16] As this individual recalled, the agents were

[14] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 184; H. Hackfeld & Co. to Oahu Sugar Company, June 23, 1909, Oahu Sugar Company Records (OSC) 2/13, Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association Plantation Archives (HSPA Records), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library Hawaiian Collection; Reuben Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," chap. 2 in "Filipino History in Hawaii before 1946: The Sakada Years of Filipinos in Hawaii," (unpublished manuscript, 1988), digital reproduction of original manuscript, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library, 19-20, http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/17651.

[15] In addition to customary labor migration within the Philippines, years of economic stagnation under the Spanish colonial regime and the social dislocation of ongoing warfare had driven many young Filipinos from their villages and towns to seek employment or education in cities like Manila and Cebu. These were among the first recruits to Hawai'i; for many, migration to Hawai'i was part of a much longer trajectory of migration that neither began nor ended with HSPA recruitment. Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 20, 25-26; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 78.

[16] Jose Tantog, Interview Transcript, in *Waialua and Haleiwa* Vol. IV (1977) digital reproduction of original manuscript, 296, Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa.

seeking out bodies inscribed with the calluses that reflected the physically demanding labor of agricultural work. When the agent asked him what kind of work he did, he recounted, "Well, I said, 'Plowing, weeding, harvesting…' So he look at you, you know. He examine you, how you are, you know."[17] The inspections performed on prospective migrants at the recruitment stations in the Philippines reflected a speculation of value as it inhered in the body of a laborer. In their selection of workers, HSPA agents reduced prospective migrants to body parts, a process of abstraction that sought to reduce the complexities of migrants as humans to migrants as abstract quantities of labor power, commodities whose value was determined by their ability to perform within a racialized system of labor.

The abstraction of migrants was an extension of scientific management practices on Hawaii's sugar plantations. The HSPA maintained a scientific experiment station that tested different cane varieties, developed fertilizers, and tried out new methods of planting, harvesting, and irrigation to obtain the greatest possible yield from Hawaiian soil.[18] In the calculations of sugar production, labor was reduced to another production unit tabulated alongside water, fertilizer, and land. A typical report evaluated labor in terms of the number of acres that could be cultivated by a single man, using a particular method of production: "If 40,000 laborers, working 250 days a year, produce annually 500,000 tons of sugar, each ton of sugar has called for 20 man-days of labor."[19] According to scientific management principles, the objective of the plantation was to maximize production given an abstract input of acres, fertilizer, water, and manpower. The literal commodification of Filipino bodies was starkly expressed in plantation

[17] Tantog Interview, *Waialua and Haleiwa*, 296.
[18] A.R. Grammer, "A History of the Experiment Station of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, 1895-1945," in *Hawaiian Planters' Record*, 51, nos. 3-4 (1947): 179-181.
[19] "Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association," in *Hawaiian Planters' Record* 26, no. 4 (October 1922): 269-270.

business records. As early as 1908, Hawaiian plantations began placing orders with the HSPA for specific quantities of Filipino workers, reduced to items that could be procured alongside alphabetized quantities of fertilizer, foodstuffs, and other marketable goods with which they were requested.[20] But these efforts of abstraction failed to contain migrant Filipinos, whose transpacific mobility disrupted the logics of intra-colonial labor migration.[21]

For many Filipinos, migration to Hawai‘i offered the possibility of a new future for themselves and their families. Tenant farming on overpopulated lands predominated across the Visayas and Ilocos, where the HSPA increasingly focused its efforts after 1916, leaving Filipino farmers hopelessly indebted to absentee landlords or pushed off the land altogether to seek work in the cities.[22] Raymundo Agustin, an Ilokano from Tarlac, recalled: “Those who came to Hawaii ahead of us were sending money to the Philippines… I thought that if I were in Hawaii, I could do the same.” Agustin saw work in Hawai‘i as the best means to support his wife and children. When asked why he wanted to go to Hawai‘i, Agustin voiced the common refrain, “Life was hard in the Philippines.”[23] Remittances could significantly improve a family’s circumstances in the Philippines. But despite the pervasive poverty they experienced, Filipinos proved less tractable than the HSPA had anticipated. As sakadas, they were already accustomed to migration in search of better employment conditions. Moreover, as U.S. nationals, Filipinos, were not restricted from leaving Hawai‘i for other parts of the United States like Japanese workers.

[20] Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1983), 24.
[21] Joanna Poblete uses the term “intra-colonial” to refer to colonial subjects located in a second site of U.S. colonialism, specifically, Filipinos and Puerto Ricans recruited to Hawai‘i to take advantage of their exemption from U.S. immigration restrictions to employ them as laborers. Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire: Filipino and Puerto Rican Laborers in Hawai‘i* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 6-7.
[22] Miriam Sharma, “Towards a Political Economy of Emigration from the Philippines,” *Philippine Sociological Review* 35 no. 3-4 (1987): 27; Alcantara, Filipinos in Hawaii, 30.
[23] Raymundo Agustin, Interview Transcript, in *A Social History of Kona* (1980) digital reproduction of original manuscript, 1308, Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, http://hdl.handle.net/10125/29821.

Refusing to accept conditions on Hawaii's sugar plantations, Filipino workers defied planters' expectations of docility, forcing the HSPA to make various concessions on the labor contract. As early as April 1908, the HSPA reported to its members that some fifty to sixty workers recently arrived from the Philippines promptly broke their labor agreement when they arrived at the plantation of the Olaa Sugar Co., and left in search of higher wages on other plantations.[24] Their intractability was particularly striking considering how few Filipinos were working on Hawaiian sugar plantations at that point: just 141 in 1908 according to plantation statistics and only 86 in 1909.[25]

Filipino workers in Hawai'i also petitioned the Philippine government to intercede on their behalf, raising the possibility that the Philippine legislature might close the Philippines to Hawaiian labor recruitment. The HSPA had relied upon the goodwill of the insular government of the Philippines to keep the channels of labor migration open and already, the Philippine legislature had voiced concern over reports that Filipino workers faced exploitation on Hawaii's sugar plantations. In addition to improvements in wages and working conditions, workers' appeals to the Philippine legislature brought about the passage of a law in 1915 requiring the HSPA to provide each laborer and his family free return passage to the Philippines upon completion of a three-year contract. But many Filipinos passed on this provision to explore another option available to them as U.S. nationals.[26]

In addition to leveraging their status as colonial subjects to demand protection against exploitative labor arrangements, Filipinos often contested the terms of employment set for them by abandoning their contracts or leaving Hawai'i altogether for more lucrative jobs on the West

[24] HSPA to H. Hackfeld & Co, April 30, 1908, OSC 2/7, HSPA Records.
[25] U.S. Bureau of Labor, *Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii* no. 94 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 687.
[26] Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 51-52.

Coast or in Alaska. The HSPA avoided drawing attention to its early recruitment of Filipinos, hoping to sidestep criticism of its activities in the Philippines. But as greater numbers of Filipinos made their way across the Pacific, they could not escape the notice of organized labor, West Coast politicians, and Philippine elites, all of whom objected to Filipino labor migration. The number of Filipinos moving to Hawai‘i was, in itself, enough to raise alarm from racist politicians and organized labor on the mainland. As Filipinos continued on to the West Coast, racist anxieties intensified. Just two years after the HSPA stepped up its recruitment of Filipino laborers to counter Japanese labor organizing, the transpacific mobility of Filipinos fueled a growing Asian exclusion movement on the West Coast. Amid growing visibility of Filipinos in Hawai‘i and the West Coast, the *Literary Digest* brought these concerns together for its readers, reporting:

> There has crept into the "Paradise of the Pacific" a most tangible and troublesome serpent—the Oriental labor problem. As the Pacific Coast papers explain the situation, in order to cultivate their sugar-fields the Hawaiian planters have been importing annually many hundreds of laborers from Japan, the Philippines, India, and Europe, at great expense and at times under suspension of the United States immigration laws. But no sooner are they brought over than agents entice them to Alaska and the Coast States.[27]

The paper warned that Hawai‘i had become a means of sneaking "Oriental" labor to Alaska and the West Coast. In one instance, the article reported, Alaska salmon packers commissioned a steamer to spirit away plantation laborers from Hawai‘i, leading 150 Filipinos who stole away under cover of darkness. In another case of alleged "labor-snatching" in 1911, the territorial authorities of Hawai‘i detained nearly 300 Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans who had allegedly been recruited in Hawai‘i by two agents of the Alaska Packers' Association. Hawaii's law enforcement arrested the agents, one of whom was Filipino, on the grounds that

[27] "'Labor-Snatching' in Hawaii," *Literary Digest*, April 19, 1911, #3037-24, Record Group (RG) 350, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland.

they solicited laborers without securing the required licenses and held the migrants as witnesses, a tactic that had previously been used to prevent Japanese workers from leaving Hawai‘i. As in the earlier cases, the territorial supreme court interceded to release the detainees, ruling that the officers had exceeded their jurisdiction in violation of the migrants' rights. On April 3, 1911, 254 of the detained migrants set sail aboard the Pacific Mail Steamship *Korea* bound for Alaska.[28]

Reports of labor-snatching fueled rumors that Hawai‘i was increasingly a backdoor leading "undesirable aliens" to the Pacific Coast states where they became dependent on public relief. Among those who promoted this narrative was the U.S. Commissioner General of Immigration Daniel J. Keefe. A founder and former president of the International Longshoremen's Association, Keefe had broken with the standard-bearers of the labor movement to endorse William Howard Taft for President of the United States in 1908, and was rewarded with his appointment shortly after Taft won the election.[29] Although he clashed with his union on matters of domestic policy, Keefe remained in line with organized labor in his adamant opposition to Asian immigration. Alarmed by the growing number of Filipino migrants, particularly those reportedly continuing on to Alaska, Keefe submitted a memorandum to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and Labor in 1911 urging the restriction of Filipino migrants to Hawai‘i. The memo warned that Filipinos constituted a "serious and imminent" danger carrying a slew of diseases into U.S. ports. But Keefe's report made it clear that, in his view, the Filipinos themselves represented the most dangerous contagion.[30]

[28] "Whitney Signs Subpoena Order," *Evening bulletin* (Honolulu), March 31, 1911; "Hard Fight for Plantation Labor," *Hawaiian Gazette*, April 4, 1911.
[29] "Labor Leader Rewarded," *New York Times*, December 2, 1908.
[30] Daniel J. Keefe, Memorandum to the Secretary of Labor and Commerce, May 6, 1911, #3037-26, RG 350, Box 316, NARA.

The central issue in Keefe's report was Filipino mobility. Having noted that Filipinos could not be excluded under general immigration laws, Keefe concluded his memo by citing reports that Filipinos lured from Hawai'i by the prospect of high wages in Alaska remained in San Francisco instead of completing the voyage, suggesting that Filipino migration to the mainland would become an epidemic if immigration authorities did not act to contain it at the source. Keefe's report resonated widely, particularly among those in the labor movement who objected to what they viewed as an influx of cheap laborers accustomed to a lower standard of living.[31]

Notwithstanding Keefe's aversion to Filipino labor migration, Filipinos were, in fact, abandoning Hawaiian plantations for the West Coast, making Filipino mobility a major source of frustration for Hawaii's sugar planters. By 1911 sugar agencies began warning their plantations to be on the lookout for runners sent by agents of the Alaskan Packers' Association to induce laborers away from the plantations.[32] Filipinos had several reasons to leave Hawai'i for the mainland. Many found the pace of work on the sugar plantations relentless, the living conditions intolerable, and the pay insufficient. Although wages were significantly higher in Hawai'i than in the Philippines, so was the cost of living, particularly for those who brought their families.[33] Upon receiving their first pay in Hawai'i, many workers felt they had been duped. Pinkham and Steven initially used the contract developed by Judd and endorsed by the Philippine Commission, which withheld $2 from the workers' monthly wages to finance their return trip at the conclusion of the three-year contract period. But the Filipinos recruited in 1909 had a different understanding of the contract and, when they received their first paychecks in Hawai'i

[31] Keefe, Memorandum to the Secretary of Labor and Commerce, May 6, 1911, #3037-26, RG 350, Box 316, NARA.
[32] H. Hackfeld & Co. to OSC, March 22, 1911, OSC 2/24 HSPA Records.
[33] Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 38-39.

with wages deducted, they protested, including by abandoning their jobs, and forced the HSPA to stop the practice of withholding wages. In spite of this concession, however, the HSPA did not revise the contract to provide for return passage until 1915, leaving many Filipinos who went to Hawai‘i under the pre-1915 contract destitute and unable to return. Given the low wages, unforgiving working conditions, and likely deceptive recruitment practices in the Philippines, it is unsurprising that workers readily abandoned their contracts with the HSPA to seek employment elsewhere.[34]

Still, given the lack of options for most laborers in the Philippines, the HSPA continued to attract recruits. As remittances and the occasional Hawai‘i success story returned to the barrios, they enticed young workers to make the transpacific voyage. As a sakada recalled, the men returning from Hawai‘i stood out in his impoverished barrio: “I hear about all those Hawaiian-Filipino that came from Hawaii and they look neat. They look nice and, you know, everything is neat… So I figure I was strong, you know, and I can work. So if all those guys that I saw went and come back with something, maybe I can too, eh.”[35] Remittances sent home were sometimes used to purchase land, pay taxes on existing holdings, or assist family members seeking to establish a homestead in the Philippines. One laborer who left his home in the Visayan island of Bohol in 1918 described how he sent regular remittances to his parents, who used the funds to establish a homestead in Mindanao, using transpacific migration to finance one of the U.S. developmental projects of “settling” the island of Mindanao.[36]

By the end of the decade, Filipino migration to Hawai‘i had become so routine that Hawaii’s sugar planters came to rely on the availability of Filipino labor imports as much as with

[34] Alcantara, “Sakada, 1909-1918,” 52-53.
[35] Tantog Interview Transcript, 295-296.
[36] Leonard Aliwanag, Interview Transcript, “Washington State Oral/Aural History Program,” oral history transcripts 974-977, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, Washington.

previous migrations of Japanese workers. But while the discourse of benevolent development legitimized the HSPA's recruitment of Filipino workers, it put Hawaii's sugar planters at odds with Philippine elites, who threatened to disrupt the free migration of Filipinos to Hawai'i in pursuit of their own ideas of development. Hawaiian investment in Philippine sugar mollified the objections of the Philippines' sugar-planting elites by promoting the expansion of the industry and securing their position as major power brokers in Philippine society. The conditions gave shape to a new colonial power dynamic in the latter half of the American colonial period.

Circulation of Capital and Workers

On September 6, 1909, the *Iloilo Enterprise* reported, "Everything is activity and buoyant hope as far as the plantation men are concerned at present owing to the hopes of high prices for next year's crop under the stimulus of the Payne Tariff."[37] The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act, signed into law by President Taft shortly after he took office in 1909, had eliminated tariffs on up to 300,000 tons of Philippine sugar entering the United States, setting off a surge of investment in modern sugar mills and sugar plantations by elite Filipinos and American capitalists. In particular, sugar industrialists from Hawai'i seeking to capitalize on the new tariff law brought capital and expertise to the islands, partnering with Filipino sugar hacenderos to establish corporations centered on large-scale, modern milling operations called centrals. Encouraged by the favorable trade environment, hacenderos replanted sugar lands that had lain idle for years and others expanded their acreage. The 1913 Underwood-Simmons Act abolished tariffs on Philippine sugar altogether, attracting even more U.S. investment.[38] The new favorable trade

[37] "Animation on the Haciendas," *Iloilo Enterprise* 1, no. 96, September 6, 1909, American Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines.
[38] "Sara to Treble Sugar Crop," *Iloilo Enterprise* 2, no. 35, January 27, 1910.

legislation and influx of investment promised economic recovery and growth in an industry that had languished under years of warfare and neglect. But while the circulation of capital into the Philippines ushered in a new era of prosperity in the Philippine sugar industry, investments in plantation agriculture deepened inequities within Philippine society while also rendering the Philippines as a whole economically dependent on the United States.

From 1912 to 1920, capital investments from Hawai‘i proved instrumental in modernizing Philippine sugar production and making it a viable industry in an increasingly competitive global market. The HSPA, like other American and European firms, had long been interested in the various commercial possibilities in the Philippines and was poised to take advantage of the new tariff laws as they were enacted. When Albert F. Judd went to the Philippines to lay the groundwork for Filipino labor recruitment in 1906, he also investigated the potential for investing in Philippine sugar and determined that Negros had the best environmental, labor, and business conditions for such an enterprise. He benefited from the knowledge produced by the U.S. insular government, which, under the direction of individuals like Dean Worcester, explored and publicized possibilities for economic development across the islands to attract U.S. dollars. Extensive studies of climate and soil conditions commissioned by the U.S. Department of Interior had shown various regions of the Philippines to be ideal for the cultivation of sugarcane, abaca, and other tropical products.[39] Individuals involved in various aspects of sugar production and marketing in Hawai‘i found a new outlet for their expertise after the United States took possession of the Philippines, forging an extensive transpacific network of investment and migration between the two U.S. colonies.

[39] Examples can be found as appendices to the annual *Report of the Philippine Commission* (1902); see also Alcantara, “The Bitter and the Sweet,” chap. 1 in “Filipino History in Hawaii before 1946,” (unpublished manuscript), 17.

While U.S. tariff legislation encouraged the movement of U.S. capital into the Philippines, drawing the Philippines more deeply into the U.S. economic sphere, colonial policy seemed to move in the opposite direction—at least on the surface. In 1916, the United States passed the Jones Act creating an all-Filipino legislature to replace the Philippine Commission and promising future autonomy to the Philippines. The Jones Act accelerated the process of Filipinization that had begun when Governor General Francis Burton Harrison inaugurated in 1913 a policy of transferring civil administration from American officials to Filipinos. The Philippine government established the Philippine National Bank (PNB) in 1916. Among the major functions of the PNB were breaking Philippine dependence on foreign banking institutions and providing longterm loans for the development of the Philippines' agricultural sector. By far the largest agricultural sector in which the PNB invested was sugar. In the first ten years of its operation, long-term loans to sugar centrals accounted for 53 percent of the total amount loaned out by the PNB, with an additional 7 percent financing short-term loans for sugarcane production.[40] The PNB played a central role in promoting economic development and capital investment in the Philippines. As the Jones Act marked the Filipinization of the Philippine government, the establishment of the PNB marked the Filipinization of the Philippine economy. But far from dismantling colonial economic frameworks, the expansion of sugar production increased Philippine dependence on U.S. trade policy and intensified social divisions in the Philippine countryside.[41]

The focus on sugar in economic development strategies encouraged the oligopolistic tendencies that accompanied sugar production globally. Following the rise in sugar prices that

[40] Yoshiko Nagano, "The Philippine National Bank and Sugar Centrals During the American Period," *Philippine Studies* 40, No. 2 (1993): 221.
[41] Nagano, "The Philippine National Bank and Sugar Centrals During the American Period," 220.

resulted from disruptions in production during World War I, the PNB financed several sugar centrals organized by Filipino land owners, often with the assistance of American investors. The Philippine sugar lands, already concentrated in the hands of a small land owning elite, formed part of the collateral for the PNB loans that financed centrals. These land owners typically became the major stockholders once the PNB debt was liquidated, further consolidating the ownership and management of Philippine sugar production in the hands of a few prominent families. As Yoshiko Nagano has observed, the government policy of promoting the establishment of Filipino sugar centrals was successful, but this policy also widened income disparity within the industry.[42] Paul Kramer has explained this phenomenon as an inclusionary racial formation which, "invited and delimited Filipino political agency in colonial state-building."[43] Under this formation, Kramer argues, the U.S. colonial state and collaborating Filipino elites constructed a new racial state organized around colonial notions of "capacity," which enabled the participation of elites. The cooperation of elite Filipinos with the U.S. colonial administration, in turn, legitimized U.S. rule while simultaneously excluding most Filipinos. The role of Filipino sugar planters in Philippine economic development, however, reflected an alternate formation during the latter half of the American colonial period, in which the state was organized around racial capitalism. That was particularly evident in the Philippines, where Spanish and Chinese mestizos had been central to the concentration of wealth and the formation of a cosmopolitan elite in the nineteenth century under Spanish rule. For Philippine elites, new possibilities for capital concentration in sugar meant consolidating their position through the shared interests of capital and the colonial state.[44]

[42] Nagano, "The Philippine National Bank and Sugar Centrals During the American Period," 230.
[43] Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 5.
[44] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 147-200.

Since Philippine sugar production had become vastly outdated by 1910, Filipino sugar planters welcomed investment from outside sources like Hawai‘i. Long after most of the world’s cane sugar producers had adopted modern centrifugal refining methods, Philippine sugar mills continued to produce sugar through an inefficient process of feeding cane by hand into roller mills, then boiling the cane in open kettles. Moreover, the outdated mills in the Philippines turned out low-grade muscovado, an unrefined sugar that had been largely replaced by the highly refined cane sugar turned out by centrifugal mills and by beet sugar. Cane cultivation in the Philippines also lagged far behind industry standards, yielding a lower volume of sugarcane per acre and sugarcane with an overall lower content of sucrose than plantations in Hawai‘i, Cuba, and other major cane-producing regions, which benefited from the expertise of well funded agricultural experiment stations.[45] Adding to the years of political instability and a rinderpest epidemic around the turn of the century that wiped out roughly 80 percent of the carabao Filipinos used as work animals, Philippine hacenderos lacked access to the capital necessary for technological improvement and the implementation of scientific management techniques.[46]

For many Americans in the insular government and their supporters in the United States, U.S. investment went hand-in-hand with intercolonial labor migration to promote the economic development of the Philippines. In response to criticism of Filipino migration to Hawai‘i voiced by Daniel Keefe as immigration commissioner, Governor-General Willliam Cameron Forbes argued that Filipinos who had migrated to Hawai‘i proved capable of learning to work and served to “advertise” how, under U.S. tutelage, Filipinos could be molded into a modern

[45] As of 1912, studies of Philippine sugar production found that this method of production required roughly ten tons of sugarcane to produce one ton of sugar. By contrast, the more modern methods of sugar production in Hawai‘i yielded the same amount of sugar from roughly 6.8 tons of sugarcane of a comparable quality. *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (hereafter *LPSM*) 48, no. 14 (1912): 245.
[46] “Prospectus of the San Carlos Milling Co.,” p. 8, Box 947, RG 350, NARA; *LPSM* 48, no. 14 (1912): 245.

workforce capable of meeting the demands of capital. At stake in this defense of Filipino migrants was the whole project of "benevolent assimilation." Among the factors that had discouraged early U.S. investors in Philippine enterprise was the idea that Filipinos were not industrious laborers. According to Forbes, migration attested to the pedagogical successes of the U.S. empire.[47] But labor migration also had strong opponents in the Philippines. Filipino politicians like Benito Legarda and Manuel Quezon opposed the emigration of Filipino workers, insisting that their labors would be better employed to build up industry at home and expand agricultural development into sparsely populated Mindanao. Still, they strongly objected to "any proposition which would exclude Filipinos—laborers or otherwise—from going freely to any part of the world under the jurisdiction of the United States government."[48] Such restrictions undermined their position within the U.S. empire, in particular, the claims of Philippine elites to presume authority over Filipinos as a whole.

Amid efforts to rebuild the Philippine sugar industry, the perceived drain on labor sparked vigorous opposition from both Filipinos and Americans who had an interest in the economic development of the Philippines. In 1906 the editor of the Filipino newspaper *El Adelanto* called upon his colleagues to warn the Filipino masses against the enticements offered by Judd and the HSPA. He compared the proposed emigration of Filipino laborers to "the bleeding of the country" and complained of its "incalculable" damage.[49] In particular, the mostly Spanish and mestizo hacenderos in the Visayas grew increasingly agitated as HSPA recruitment in the southern Philippine islands expanded under Oswald Steven after 1909. Like their

[47] Worcester to Forbes, August 4, 1911, #3037-34, Box 316, RG 350 NARA; Forbes to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, August 9, 1911, #3037-32, Box 316, RG 350, NARA.
[48] Benito Legarda and Manuel Quezon to the Secretary of War, February 2, 1911, #3037-19, Box 316, RG 350, NARA.
[49] "More About Agent Judd from the Manila Press," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, June 27, 1906.

counterparts in Hawai‘i, Philippine hacenderos complained of an ever-present shortage of labor, often to advance legislation that would enable them to control their workers through criminal penalties or to recruit foreign labor, especially from China. Although Steven avoided the major sugar-producing districts of the Visayas for labor recruitment, his presence in the southern Philippines created tension with hacenderos on Negros, who depended on supplementary labor from neighboring islands to meet seasonal demands. Sakadas brought in from neighboring Visayan islands on contract earned an average of 25 centavos per day plus rations, a pittance compared to the wages promised by HSPA recruiters.[50]

Not surprisingly, Steven and the Filipino contractors he sent out into the islands to recruit for the HSPA faced strong opposition, particularly among elite hacenderos whose paternalistic and coercive control over workers was undermined by migration to Hawai‘i. Hacenderos' opposition took the form of legal action and outright violence. In December, 1910, the townspeople of Tacloban, Cebu, descended on the docks armed with clubs and sticks to keep a contingent of recruits from departing for Hawai‘i, a scene repeated in several towns across the Visayas from 1909 to 1911. Local townspeople also brought numerous lawsuits against Steven and Pinkham for recruiting minors in violation of an old Spanish law to keep workers from leaving, a tactic effective at stalling entire shiploads of workers bound for Hawai‘i. Added to this direct opposition, Filipino newspapers reported that early recruits to Hawai‘i had been duped, stranded, and left to starve. Despite the efforts against his work, Steven convinced increasing numbers of workers to leave the Visayas for Hawai‘i. Although some Filipinos were indeed

[50] Over the previous half century, Visayan sugar haciendas had developed a dual system of labor consisting of a permanent labor force, duma‘an, and a seasonal labor force, sakadas. Living on or near the hacienda and employed year round, duma‘an were typically bound to a hacendero by chronic indebtedness. Sakadas were recruited to meet demand during the peak labor season from November to April, when sugarcane was cut, milled, and replanted. Each year, in anticipation of the harvest, the sugar hacenderos of Negros sent labor contractors to Cebu, Bohol, and other Visayan islands to recruit sakadas for the seasonal demand. Herbert S. Walker, *The Sugar Industry in the Island of Negros* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1910), 20; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 77-78.

stranded and destitute in Hawai‘i, remittances and letters home from early recruits, coupled with limited prospects at home, induced still more Visayans to take their chances across the Pacific.[51]

The widespread opposition to the HSPA's recruiting activities might have resulted in stronger restrictions on Filipino labor recruitment had it not been for the extensive investment of Hawaiian capital in Philippine sugar production, an arrangement that enriched hacenderos while producing profits for HSPA shareholders. On July 12, 1912, the *Manila Daily Bulletin* announced the launch of a new sugar company in the San Carlos district of Negros, Occidental, under the headline, "Hawaiian Capital to Invade Philippines for the Manufacture of Sugar."[52] Incorporated under the laws of the Territory of Hawaii on June 7, 1912 with an initial capital of $400,000, the new San Carlos Milling Company was established by HSPA trustees to build and operate facilities for the manufacture of sugar in the Philippines, beginning with the construction of a modern sugar central in San Carlos City with the capacity to process 600 tons of cane daily. The company would also construct a railway to transport cane from the plantations to the factory and a warehouse and wharf for storing and shipping the manufactured sugar.[53]

To promote itself to potential investors, the San Carlos Milling Company situated its goals alongside the U.S. objectives of "uplift" through economic development. The planning for the mill had begun with W. H. Lambert, a building contractor in the Philippines who had previously spent a decade in Hawai‘i, where he oversaw the construction of railroads and wharves that were essential to the expansion of sugar production under the short-lived Republic of Hawaii in the 1890s and during the early territorial period. In 1905, Lambert embarked for the Philippines, where he established himself as a contractor building schools, bridges, piers, and

[51] Mojares, "Cebuano Perceptions of the Hawaii Migration, 80; Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 22.
[52] "San Carlos Sugar Company Launched," *Manila Daily Bulletin*, July 12, 1912, #25996-4, Box 947, RG 350, NARA.
[53] "Prospectus of the San Carlos Milling Co.," 8.

other public works projects across the Visayas, mainly on Iloilo and Negros.[54] After extensively surveying the region and engaging local sugar hacenderos, he submitted plans to his associates in Hawai‘i for the construction of a new milling operation that later became the San Carlos Milling Company. Using his connections with Hawaii's leading capitalists, Lambert helped to launch a new era in the Philippine sugar industry based on modern sugar centrals that promised to revitalize the Philippine sugar industry and develop the economy of the Visayas. The investment in sugar centrals did, in fact, generate tremendous amounts of wealth for Philippine sugar hacenderos, while also making money for investors from Hawai‘i. But development produced mixed results. The establishment of sugar centrals had driven economic development irreversibly toward a plantation structure with increasing concentrations of capital, and a growing demand for cheap manual labor for the production of sugarcane.[55]

The San Carlos Milling Company exemplified the ways that the shared interests of capital and the colonial state came together to produce lasting colonial economic formations. Though not the first modern central, San Carlos became a model for U.S. investment in the Philippines.[56] Unable to acquire large areas of lands suitable for sugarcane production due to land ownership restrictions set forth in the Philippine Land Act of 1902, the milling company instead secured thirty-year contracts from the principal planters in the North San Carlos District to manufacture sugar from their cane. According to the contract, planters agreed to grow cane exclusively for the company. In addition to growing the cane, they were responsible for the labor-intensive tasks of cutting and hauling it to the company's locomotives. The mill company shipped the cane by rail

[54] Philippine Bureau of Public Works, *Quarterly Bulletin*, 3 no. 1 (1914): 31-36; Philippine Bureau of Public Works, *Quarterly Bulletin* 3, no. 2 (1914)3: 57.
[55] *LPSM* 47, no. 1 (1911): 1; "Prospectus of the San Carlos Milling Co.," 1.
[56] The first modern sugar central was built on the San Jose estate on island of Mindoro, on former friar lands that had been sold to the Havemeyer Sugar Trust in an underhanded deal orchestrated by Dean Worcester in 1909 (see ch. 2). Several smaller milling operations with daily capacities reaching 150 tons were also established in the Visayas around this time. *LPSM* 49, no. 25 (1912): 409.

to the newly built factory, which manufactured the sugar, then sent it to the company's wharf for shipment abroad. Under its standard agreement with planters, the San Carlos Milling Company retained 40 percent of the sugar produced and the planters the remaining share. In the event that land was sold or transferred, the conditions of the contract continued to apply to the land regardless of the new owner's preferences. If a land owner failed to cultivate the lands under contract properly, the agreement gave the company the right to intervene and oversee the production of cane for an additional portion of the profits. In its corporate prospectus, the San Carlos Milling Company emphasized the beneficial aspects of a central mill, observing that planters, "relieved of the responsibilities of grinding their own cane," would be "enabled to devote that much more attention to the cultivation of their crops."[57]

So promising was the trade environment that emerged with the tariff legislation, and later, with the onset of World War I, that before ground was broken on the factory in San Carlos, the company began expanding the original facility to a 1,000-ton daily capacity. Hawaii's sugar planters also began seeking out other viable locations for modern central construction.[58] Construction on the factory began in July 1913 and was completed in December of that year, in time for the 1914 grinding season. The elimination of tariffs on sugar, the construction of centrifugal mills, and the expansion in cane cultivation produced immediate growth in sugar exports soon followed by a dramatic surge during World War I that spurred further U.S. interest in exploiting the natural resources of the Philippines.[59] The New York-based American-Philippine Company was organized in October 1912, "for the purpose of investigating opportunities for the investment of capital in the Philippine Islands and the Orient."[60] Enlisting

[57] "Prospectus of the San Carlos Milling Co.," 9-10.
[58] *LPSM* 49, no. 9 (1912): 138.
[59] *LPSM* 53, no. 5 (1914): 70.
[60] American-Philippine Company, "Objects and Capitalization of the American-Philippine Company," (1912),

the help of Worcester, who retired from his position as Secretary of the Interior of the Philippine Islands to serve as the company's vice president, the American-Philippine Company invested extensively in sugar, copra, and ranching across the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao, where Worcester retained extensive influence and vast personal landholdings.[61] The California Fruit Canners' Association also began inquiring into the availability of public lands in the Philippines, expressing an interest in pineapple production in the Philippines, although they were cautioned that setting up plantations there would likely require that they import labor. But the sudden enthusiasm for investment in Philippine agriculture did little to address the underlying tensions between HSPA recruiters and Philippine hacenderos, who asserted their prerogative to act on behalf of the Philippine masses.[62]

At stake for Philippine elites was not just the competition over labor for their own development objectives but also their status within U.S. racial hierarchies. By leveraging their social and economic control over the general populace, Philippine elites resisted the racial formation of "little brown brothers," validating their authority through claims of razón (reason)[63]

#26391-20, Box 951, RG 350, NARA.

[61] Ronald K. Edgerton, "Frontier Society on the Bukidnon Plateau: 1870-1941," in *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Ed C. de Jesus (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), 375.

[62] California Fruit Canners' Association, general manager to General F.F. McIntyre, October 7, 1912, #26959-2, Box 1177, RG 350, NARA; Chas. C. Walcutt. Jr., acting chief of bureau, to California Fruit Canners' Association, October 16, 1912, #26959-2, Box 1177, RG 350, NARA.

[63] Philippine social relations were structured around patron-client schemas of debt and reciprocity. Often realized through landlord-tenant relations, these schemas were transposed to the political structure under Spanish rule. Within this inherently unequal relationship, tenants or clients owed their patrons tribute and loyalty—an utang na loob (debt of gratitude)—in exchange for protection and, in the case of tenants, the ability to cultivate land. While the relationship was subject to abuse or coercion on the part of the patrons, those who exploited their tenants or did not properly provide for them were deemed walang hiya (without shame), a violation of the patron-client trust that justified disobedience or rebellion on the part of the client. Borrowing from the enlightenment, Filipino elites adapted terms like razón to Filipino understandings of the tenant-client obligations. As Julian Go explains, enlightened Filipinos like Apolinario Mabini defined razón as an understanding of God's natural laws; Filipinos like Mabini believed that self-preservation required reciprocity, and that razón was the faculty that facilitated and sustained reciprocity. Elite Filipinos thereby asserted their rightful or "natural" position atop the Philippine hierarchy through claims of razón. Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S. Colonialism* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 99-100.

and forcing entities like the HSPA to negotiate the terms of their business in the Philippines. Elite Filipinos called upon a tradition of Philippine patron-client relations—a system of mutual obligation and dependence—to validate their authority to control the transpacific movements of Filipinos, mobilizing the logic of racial capitalism to reinforce their position. But neither capital nor the state—American or Filipino—could fully control the transpacific migrations of Filipinos.

Mobility and Mobilization

On the eve of World War I, the average price of sugar plummeted, throwing the U.S. sugar industry into crisis. After more than fifteen years of relentless growth—stimulated by both territorial expansion and protective legislation—overproduction on a global scale left the U.S. market saturated and without any outlet. European beet sugar production, by then responsible for roughly 45 percent of global production, supplied most of the markets in Europe. In the meantime, stimulated by a favorable trade arrangement that gave it a large portion of the U.S. market and encouraged massive U.S. investment in Cuba's sugar industry, Cuban sugar also continued to expand and further glutted the market. Philippine sugar had also begun to recover as a result of the stimulus of the Payne-Aldrich Tariff in 1909, reaching pre-revolutionary levels for the first time since the revolt against Spain began in 1896.[64]

The new trade legislation enacted on the eve of World War I made U.S. sugar beet farmers and cane producers especially vulnerable to global market conditions. In addition to removing tariffs on all sugar produced in the Philippines, the 1913 Underwood Tariff Act contained a provision that would eliminate tariffs on sugar completely beginning May 1, 1916. Although the act presumably gave beet sugar producers a period in which to adjust, its effects on

[64] Calculated from statistics in "Sugar Crops of the World," *Willett & Gray's Weekly Statistical Sugar Trade Journal* 38 no. 2 (1914): 21. See also Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 51-52.

farmers were immediate: as the long-term outlook for domestic sugar production looked increasingly bleak, many found it difficult to secure financing for machinery and supplies.[65] After more than a decade of rapid growth, farmers abandoned beets for other crops. The U.S. beet sugar industry experienced a sharp and sudden downturn. By spring of 1914, U.S. sugar beet cultivation had been reduced by 134,000 acres, cutting beet cultivation by one-fifth from the previous year and forcing many beet sugar factories to shut down.[66] The effects of the tariff were also felt in U.S. cane sugar production: in Louisiana, the prospect of "free sugar" forced 42 mills and plantations out of business. In Puerto Rico a half dozen centrals went into bankruptcy.[67] In Hawai'i, meanwhile, a prolonged drought resulted in low crop yields, compounding the effects of the crowded market for Hawaii's sugar producers. Planters responded by reducing wages, laying off workers, and cutting production, leading to high unemployment for the first time in the history of Hawaii's sugar industry.[68]

The downward trend in sugar prices abruptly reversed as the German army tore through France and Belgium in August 1914, devastating agricultural production, including beet sugar manufactured for export. Great Britain, which imported massive quantities of sugar from various European suppliers, also lost access to sugar from Germany, Austria, and Hungary with the outbreak of war. To meet demand, Britain began importing sugar from Cuba, the United States, and other sources, driving up prices across the globe and halting the decline in production. By late September, the *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* reported a "phenomenal advance" in the price of Hawaiian sugar, sufficient to reverse the downturn that Hawaii's sugar

[65] "Industrial Conditions," *Facts about Sugar* 1, no. 1 (1914): 1.
[66] Trade publications reported the total acreage sown to beets in 1914 to be 513,201, as compared to 647,506 the previous year, before the tariff was signed into law. "Industrial Conditions," *Facts about Sugar* 1, no. 1 (1914): 4.
[67] *Facts About Sugar* 2, no. 2 (1915): 1.
[68] Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 32.

planters had faced just a few months earlier. The same issue reported the expansion of the Hawaiian-owned San Carlos Milling Company, which had just begun grinding sugar earlier that year. Updated production methods in the new sugar central enabled Philippine hacenderos in Negros to maximize their profits as the price of sugar rose, while the company's investors from Hawai'i enjoyed a return far greater than anticipated in the central's first season in operation. Those initial results generated more capital investment in Philippine sugar.[69] Meanwhile, in California and all across the western United States, beet fields left idle the previous season returned to production and expanded for the 1915-1916 growing season.[70] Factories, both new and reopened, accommodated the expanded acreage. Although the war in Europe reinvigorated the U.S. sugar industry, not everyone shared in its sudden prosperity. Amid the fluctuations in the sugar market, workers across the Pacific protested the conditions of their labor, generating a crisis in sugar production that was ultimately resolved through the consolidation of capital and the racial division of labor.

Among those left out of the wartime expansion, at least initially, were U.S. sugar beet farmers. Although the price of sugar was on the rise, the price that sugar factories paid for beets failed to keep pace with inflation, largely because of the nature of beet farmers' contracts with the factories. With the establishment of the industry in the 1890s, investors like Henry Oxnard and Claus Spreckels determined the location of factories in part on the number of farmers willing to sign contracts to grow sugar beets to run their factories, establishing an industry norm whereby planters committed to growing a specified acreage of beets for a fixed price before

[69] *LPSM* 53, no. 13 (1914): 198, 203-204.
[70] In the years preceding the war, the price paid to the producer by sugar factories typically averaged about $4 per ton. In 1915, this climbed to $4.50-$4.75 per ton and $5 for the 1916 season as a base rate. With an additional bonus for beets yielding a higher sugar content, the average reached $6 per ton during the 1916 season. *Facts About Sugar* 3, no. 5 (1916): 79.

planting their fields. During periods of relative stability, such contracts protected farmers against any unexpected decline in the price of sugar. But as wartime inflation continued, the price of rent, labor, and the cost of living rose faster than prices paid to farmers. Unable to compete with the producers of more profitable crops, sugar beet farmers' dependence on migrant labor grew especially pressing as the price of labor rose sharply. The burden of production costs fell increasingly on farmers, while sugar factories capitalized on the rising price of sugar. Feeling that they were not being treated fairly, many sugar beet farmers organized to demand that the price of sugar be fixed to the price of sugar commanded by the factories. Others protested by converting their farm lands to alternate crops, forcing some factories to shut down again in 1918.[71]

The resistance of sugar beet farmers against what they saw as unjust treatment from the sugar factories disrupted U.S. mobilization efforts during World War I. After the United States entered the conflict in 1917, the United States Food Administration took control of the U.S. sugar industry. The Food and Fuel Control Act (Lever Act), signed into law on August 10, 1917, as a wartime emergency measure, authorized the president to regulate the price of food. From the 1917-18 season to the 1918-19 season, the acreage devoted to sugar beets in California decreased by about one-third, as farmers abandoned sugar beets for more lucrative crops, threatening to leave the United States with a sugar shortage. Herbert Hoover, then the director of the USDA, sent a circular letter to all sugar beet farmers, imploring each to "come to his country's aid in this hour of need" and to demonstrate his patriotism by maintaining, if not extending, his normal acreage of sugar beets.[72] Such appeals to patriotic duty notwithstanding, farmers continued to

[71] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Manufactures, *Shortage of Sugar: Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Manufactures*, 65th Cong., 2nd sess., 1918, 451-452, 464, 507.
[72] Hoover circular letter, October 22, 1917, quoted from Joshua Bernhardt, "Government Control of Sugar During the War," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 33, no. 4 (1919): 676-677.

withdraw from sugar production, creating a panic over a potential shortage that triggered a USDA investigation in December 1917. The timing was significant: to ensure a successful harvest, sugar beets had to be planted by the end of December. Threatened with a significant loss in production as the United States grew more deeply involved in the war, the Food Administration intervened, pressuring sugar manufacturers to offer farmers more favorable contracts. As a result of this pressure, the beet farmers of the United States received an average price of $10.00 per ton for beets in 1918 as against $6.12 in 1916.[73] The USDA's intervention decided in favor of sugar beet farmers against the sugar manufacturers as a wartime measure, but ultimately, World War I drew capital and the state more closely together. When the United States began mobilizing for war, the government relied on corporations like the American Sugar Refining Company for the organization of the war economy. The investigation of the Sugar Trust was suspended in 1917 for the duration of the war and dropped altogether in 1921.[74]

Across the Pacific, workers in Hawai‘i faced similar wartime pressures of inflation, even as Hawaii's sugar planters amassed record profits. But the U.S. state's responses to worker disruptions varied widely from white sugar beet farmers to Filipino plantation laborers, reinforcing the racial division of labor across the U.S. empire. At its annual shareholders' meeting in December 1914 the HSPA's outgoing president, E. Faxon Bishop, announced a complete recovery of sugar prices and the territory's "greatest crop in the history of sugar culture," which set a new record for Hawaiian sugar tonnage. Although the outbreak of war had reversed the downturn in the industry, the prospect of free sugar continued to weigh heavily over Hawaii's sugar planters. Bishop warned of the impending decline anticipated to result from the

[73] Bernhardt, "Government Control of Sugar," 679.
[74] Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 46.

free sugar provisions of the Underwood tariff bill, set to take effect in May 1916.[75] Responding to pressure from U.S. cane and sugar beet producers, Woodrow Wilson signed the Kitchin Bill, which unconditionally repealed the free sugar provisions of the tariff bill shortly before they were set to be implemented. Safe from what they understood as the "menace" of free sugar, the HSPA immediately shifted its concern to the labor question.[76]

During the war, Hawaii's sugar planters never experienced the same severe labor shortage as West Coast agricultural producers. Unlike the West Coast, where workers freely moved among a variety of industries, workers in Hawai'i had few options beyond the highly organized system of sugar plantations, which cooperated to limit competition for labor. Although trade publications reported a "considerable exodus" of Filipinos for California, it was not as significant as Hawaii's sugar planters feared due to a lack of steerage on boats, which limited the number who could make the Pacific crossing. Instead Hawaii's plantation workers continued to organize, preparing for the next major labor conflict on the horizon. It erupted after the war when, amid record profits, the HSPA arbitrarily reduced worker compensation. Fearing that the sudden rise in wages threatened its control over the workforce, the HSPA revised the system by which it paid its workers, producing widespread resentment that fed the interwar labor movement.[77]

The origins of the emerging labor movement lay in the HSPA's resolution to the 1909 strike. To address worker grievances and prevent future strikes, the HSPA instituted a bonus system in 1911. Employees earning $24 a month or less in wages who worked an average of 20 days each month received a profit-sharing bonus at the end of the grinding season.[78] According

[75] *LPSM* 53, no. 26 (1914): 410.
[76] *Facts about Sugar* 2, no. 11 (1916): 1.
[77] *Facts About Sugar* 6, no. 1 (1918): 12.
[78] Contractors were excluded from the original bonus system, but were included when the HSPA revised the bonus system in 1916. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 196.

to the bonus schedule, when the price of sugar did not exceed $70 per ton (3.5 cents per pound) on the New York market, no bonus was paid. For each dollar above $70 that sugar yielded, plantations paid qualifying workers a bonus of one percent of their annual wage earnings. In 1916, this bonus was increased to one and a half percent for each dollar over $70 in response to wartime inflation. Initially, the HSPA devised bonuses as a means of responding to ongoing pressure from workers for higher wages without conceding the higher wage rate demanded by the strikers. Under the bonus system, plantations withheld bonuses until the grinding season was over in November or December, keeping workers from striking at a critical moment in the production cycle. Still, the arrangement was satisfactory enough to quell labor unrest for a time. In 1912, bonuses reached thirteen percent of a workers' annual earnings, exceeding the two dollar per month wage increase demanded by workers in the 1909 strike. But bonuses were subject to market shifts and the arbitrary decision-making powers of the planters' association.[79]

As sugar prices surged during the war in Europe, bonuses accounted for an increasingly significant portion of a worker's earnings. From 1914 to 1915 the annual bonus rose from five to twenty percent of a worker's annual wages, and continued to climb to 59 percent in 1916, and 79 percent in 1917.[80] Despite the significant boost in earnings from bonuses, plantation workers confronted higher prices on food and other goods until the bonus was paid at the end of the year. Unable to anticipate ongoing inflation, many workers had sent their previous bonuses home to relatives in Japan, leaving them with wages insufficient to cover the rising cost of living.[81] Japanese labor organizers used wartime inflation to demand an increase in regular wages or a revision of the bonus system that would give plantation laborers a greater share of the profits.

[79] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Conditions in Hawaii* (1915), 29-30; Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 197.
[80] *Facts about Sugar* 5, no. 11 (1917): 206.
[81] *Facts about Sugar* 5, no. 8 (1917): 146.

Instead, fearing that high bonus earnings during the war would inflate workers' earning expectations and produce conflict following the war when prices were expected to fall, the HSPA revised the bonus system in 1917 so that part of the bonus would be paid to workers each month, but monthly wages remained the same. More importantly, the one and a half percent bonus would begin with sugar priced at $85 per ton instead of $71, reducing bonuses even as the price of sugar reached an all-time high. When the war ended the following year, growing resentment over the bonus system fueled a new labor movement that ultimately brought Japanese and Filipino plantation workers together in the first major interracial strike on Hawaii's plantations in 1920.[82]

Contrary to planters' assumptions that Filipinos would be docile workers, Filipinos in Hawai‘i protested their treatment early on. Prior to the 1920 strike, many sent letters to Manuel Quezon, president of the Philippine Senate, prompting an investigation by the Filipino commissioner in Hawai‘i, Prudencio A. Remigio. Remigio's report exposed the numerous indignities to which Filipinos were subjected. Filipinos were relegated to the lowest positions on the plantation labor force and struggled to meet their basic needs. Compared to the housing for other workers, plantation housing for Filipinos was the poorest, featuring overcrowded conditions in dilapidated structures. Housing, like pay and job designation, was a means of marking and reinforcing the racialized hierarchy on the plantation. It was clear that Filipinos were at the bottom. They struggled to find alternate employment in the cities, but often took their chances to escape the crushing monotony and isolation of plantation life. However, Remigio reported, Filipinos faced discrimination that kept them from most of these higher paying jobs. "If the opportunities were equal to all workers of different nationalities…they would be able to

[82] *Facts about Sugar* 5, no 26 (1917): 506.

improve their situation," he noted, but offering such opportunities "does not suit the interests of the estates and agricultural centers."[83] Remigio reported that for workers Hawai'i was a "prison with doors open for entry and closed for departure." Remigio also reported in 1919 that workers' wages were the same as in 1912, the last time the Philippine legislature had commissioned an investigation of Filipinos' working conditions in Hawai'i.[84]

Filipinos contested these conditions in a variety of ways. By calling upon their representatives in the Philippine government, they demanded that the state fulfill its obligation as patrons. Others simply abandoned their contracts in search of better opportunities. Because Filipinos, as subjects of the United States, faced no legal restrictions in moving across U.S. states and territories, seeking more attractive opportunities on the West Coast or Alaska provided an option for escaping exploitative and abusive working conditions that was not available to Japanese workers. Over the course of the decade, a growing number of Filipinos recruited by the HSPA left the Philippines with no intention of remaining in Hawai'i.[85]

Although planters were vexed by what they saw as the "poaching" of Filipino plantation labor by mainland recruiters for the West Coast agricultural and fishing industries, they had little choice but to accept that they would lose some proportion of laborers as part of the cost of doing business. But prospective recruits remained not only plentiful, they grew in number, to the point that by 1920 the HSPA ceased actively seeking out workers in the remote barrios, and instead allowed workers to come to them. The greater conflict that emerged came not from Hawai'i, but from mainland politicians and labor organizations alarmed by the growing number of Filipinos in

[83] Prudencio A. Remigio, Government of the Philippine Islands Department of Commerce and Commuications, *Report of the Filipino Commissioner to Hawaii Regarding the Conditions of the Workers in the Territory, 1919* (hereafter Remigio Report), trans. Edgar C. Knowlton, Jr. (Honolulu: Filipino Historical Society of Hawaii, 1982), 22.
[84] Remigio Report, 30.
[85] Lasker, *Filipino Immigration*, 53.

West Coast cities and farming communities. Amid growing animosity toward immigrants from Asia as well as southern and eastern Europe that dramatically reduced and shifted immigration patterns in the early twentieth century, Filipino migration to the West Coast also produced new contradictions.

Transpacific Uprisings

World War I had been a moment of anti-colonial possibility for millions across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Guided, in some instances, by the principle of national self-determination famously articulated in Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech of January 1918, and in others, by Vladimir Lenin's vision of international communism, which linked imperialism to capitalism, anti-colonial nationalist movements flourished in the aftermath of the war. But the global conflict had also resulted in the consolidation of capital and natural resources that reproduced colonial social organization and undermined democratic control. In the sugar-producing territories of Hawai'i and the Philippines, in particular, record profits during the war enabled a sugar-planting oligarchy to further amass lands and wealth to strengthen its grip on territorial politics, and to reinforce the deep inequalities within the structure of plantation society. The growing inequality produced rifts that erupted into resistance and outright rebellion across the Pacific. As workers refused the terms of colonial economic development, they challenged the very basis of U.S. imperial expansion.

In Hawai'i, the Big Five sugar agencies consolidated their control over the Hawaiian sugar industry. In 1909, the five agencies controlled 76 percent of Hawaiian sugar production. By 1920, they had increased that figure to 94 percent and extended that influence to the territorial government, where they further dictated terms favorable to their industry. The near-

complete level of control that the Big Five enjoyed facilitated extensive cooperation of planters through the HSPA to organize a united front against workers to control wages and working conditions.[86]

Plantation workers, frustrated with the unstable and unreliable bonus system over the course of the war became increasingly organized and militant in the face of the arbitrary power exercised by the HSPA. Japanese workers from across Hawai‘i came together in December 1919 to combine individual plantation unions into the Japanese Federation of Labor to press for higher wages, shorter hours, and paid maternity leave. Though lacking the complex organizational structure of the Japanese federation, Filipino plantation workers organized under the Filipino Labor Union for similar demands. Initially, cultural and linguistic barriers—as well as the work of HSPA spies and agents provocateur—hindered efforts to bring the two nascent unions together. But the planters' refusal to meet either organization's demands pushed them into a decisive, if unstable alliance. Workers' frustrations built up during the war culminated in the massive 1920 strike that united Japanese and Filipino workers across the sugar plantations on O‘ahu, striking a dramatic blow against the HSPA's longstanding strategy of keeping the labor force divided along ethnic lines.[87]

The figure most instrumental in organizing Filipinos' involvement in the 1920 strike was a young organizer from Batangas named Pablo Manlapit. Manlapit had arrived from the Philippines in 1910, and had previously worked on the Kūka‘iau plantation on the Big Island until he was fired in 1912 for union activities, whereupon he relocated to Hilo and started a

[86] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 178.
[87] The 1920 strike is significant as the first major plantation strike that brought significant numbers of workers together across ethnic lines. For a complete account of the strike, see Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 196-215; Jung, *Reworking Race*, 87-90.

Filipino weekly newspaper titled *Ang Sandata* (*The Sword*).[88] When Hawaii's plantation workers experienced unemployment before the war, Manlapit organized the Filipino Laborers' Association of Hilo to protest the HSPA's continued recruitment of Filipinos. Prior to 1915, Filipino labor contracts did not include return passage to the Philippines, leaving many workers unemployed and stranded in Hawai'i. Under Manlapit's leadership, the Filipino Laborers' Association demanded that the planters' association either provide jobs to the 2,000 unemployed Filipinos of Hilo or provide them return passage to the Philippines. In response to appeals from Filipinos in Hawai'i protesting their poor treatment, the Philippine legislature passed a law authorizing the Philippine governor-general to appoint a Filipino labor commissioner to hear workers' complaints and oversee their contracts. In December 1915, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported that "several thousand" Filipinos in Hawai'i had signed a petition to Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison to assign Manlapit to the newly created post, a request that seems not to have been given serious consideration by Harrison.[89] Instead, Manlapit continued to organize Filipino workers in Honolulu as a member of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) during a major strike in 1916, where he first gained exposure to interracial labor organizing. He began organizing the Filipino Labor Union as early as November 1918, and was instrumental in precipitating the 1920 strike, which brought together the grievances of nearly a decade of labor organizing among Filipinos in Hawai'i.[90]

Despite an impressive show of unity between Filipino and Japanese plantation workers, they faced a formidable opponent in the centralized management of the HSPA. At the first sign of labor unrest, the plantations closed ranks to protect their common interests and mitigate financial

[88] Alcantara, "Sakada, 1909-1918," 39.
[89] "Filipinos Ask for Labor Commissioner," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* December 14, 1915, 3:30 edition.
[90] John E. Reinecke, *The Filipino Piecemeal Sugar Strike of 1924-1925* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 4-8.

losses from the strike. On July 1, 1920, the strike ended when union leaders capitulated after 165 days. Despite major disruptions to the production of sugar across the island of O‘ahu, the high price of sugar that year, combined with a large tariff bounty, brought Hawaii’s sugar planters immense profits in 1920. The extensive cooperation among the planters further ensured that no struck plantation suffered alone, as losses were shared across the board. But because the strike revealed what was for planters the alarming potential for their workers to cooperate across ethnic lines, they agreed to hear the workers’ grievances, albeit through an intermediary amenable to the planters’ desires. Cayetano Ligot, appointed to the position of resident labor commissioner by Governor-General Leonard Wood, arrived in Hawai‘i on April 27, 1923 to investigate the conditions of Filipino workers in Hawai‘i. In the years since the 1920 strike, the price of sugar had collapsed, proving the inadequacy of the bonus system to provide workers with a living wage. Labor organizers like Manlapit had continued to agitate for higher wages and improved living and working conditions. Even Ligot, who was unquestionably sympathetic to the planters and paternalistic toward Filipino plantation workers, recognized a need for a revision of the bonus system and oversaw a workers’ convention that passed resolutions demanding modest wage increases and housing development to relieve overcrowding in Filipino workers’ living arrangements. When even these relatively modest demands were ignored, Filipino workers, again led by Manlapit, struck O‘ahu sugar plantations in 1924.[91]

As in previous conflicts between plantation workers and their employers, Hawaii’s sugar planters had the steadfast support of the territorial authorities and law enforcement. The planters’ association closed ranks, marshaling the resources of the state, including passage of a number of

[91] By this time, many Japanese workers had left the plantations for other employment, while the Philippines remained the only source for new labor. As a result, by 1924, Filipino workers were a clear majority of the plantation labor force. For a comprehensive overview of the 1924 strike, see Reinecke, *The Filipino Piecemeal Sugar Strike*; also Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 216-232.

anti-labor statutes designed to undermine labor organizing, including laws against "loitering" and criminal syndicalism laws modeled after mainland efforts to repress the publication of radical materials.[92] In addition, the plantations deputized and armed a "special police" force to fight the strikers, with force, if necessary. The anticipation and preparation for violence became a reality, erupting in armed conflict at Hanapepe, Kaua'i on September 9, 1924. The episode claimed the lives of sixteen strikers and four police. As a result of what has become known as the Hanapepe Massacre, 161 strikers were jailed and 76 indicted for rioting.[93] The HSPA and territorial newspapers dismissed the 1924 strike as the work of a few "agitators." In fact, it was, in many ways, more disruptive than the 1920 strike, even though the strikers lacked the active participation of the more organized Japanese workers. Japanese workers were, by all accounts, sympathetic to the strike, but by 1924, many had left the ranks of unskilled labor in the plantations, as the Philippines remained the only source of new plantation laborers. Filipinos had surpassed Japanese as the largest group of plantation workers in Hawai'i by 1922, shifting the dynamics of plantation labor protest.[94] Whereas previous strikes had been ascribed to Japanese nationalists seeking to subvert U.S. rule in Hawai'i, this position was increasingly untenable as Filipinos became a larger part of the plantation work force and Filipino labor militancy took on a character and direction of its own.[95]

Like previous waves of migrants, Filipinos in Hawai'i and the mainland United States established communities over time that enabled them to organize more effectively. But unlike

[92] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 214-215.
[93] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 221-222.
[94] *Thrum's* (1922): 14.
[95] Moon-Kie Jung has shown how Hawaiian sugar planters projected divergent racializations upon their Japanese and Filipino workers. Whereas they imagined Filipinos to be childlike, but volatile, anti-Japanese racism was rooted in the idea that Japanese workers and their Hawaiian-born descendants remained loyal to Japan and plotted a Japanese takeover of the Hawaiian sugar industry. Even though Filipino workers tended to be more militant and eager to strike, Hawaiian sugar planters and the press initially ascribed labor unrest primarily to Japanese subversion. Jung, *Reworking Race*, 88-90.

earlier labor movements, Filipino labor organization developed an explicitly anti-colonial critique that drew attention to the contradictions of U.S. imperial expansion. Filipino labor migration to both Hawai‘i and the mainland United States increased dramatically in the 1920s, making Filipino migrants a principal source of new labor for sugar plantations in Hawai‘i, large-scale farming operations in California, and other industries like salmon-canning in Alaska. By this time, a generation of Filipinos were coming of age who had been educated in U.S.-run schools, often by American teachers, who instilled in them a set of values and ambitions incompatible with colonial labor arrangements. Influenced by earlier *pensionados*—Filipinos sponsored by the insular government to attend school in the United States beginning in 1903—a growing number of Filipinos were drawn to the United States for the opportunity of becoming self-supporting students. The Alaska canneries were a particularly attractive option for Filipino students because the canning season took place during the summer months when schools were on recess. Cannery work provided sufficient employment for some to pay for school. By 1921, 957 Filipinos worked in Alaska. Seven years later, the number reached 3,939.[96]

That generation of Filipinos came of age just as U.S. immigration policy reinforced the role of colonial labor migration modeled on the Filipino migrant. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act closed the doors of immigration to the United States, establishing a system of national immigration quotas in an effort to preserve the racial homogeneity of the nation. The quota system sharply curtailed immigration from southern and eastern Europe and virtually eliminated immigration from Asia. But as U.S. nationals, Filipinos remained exempt from these quotas, as did migrants from the western hemisphere, allowing for migration from Mexico that was increasingly important to the agricultural industry of the West and Southwest. With few new

[96] Lasker, *Filipino Immigration*, 53.

arrivals entering the U.S. labor force after 1924, U.S. immigration policy sanctioned what had long been a reality: that agricultural labor was the labor of non-citizen migrants, as reflected in the number of Filipinos migrating to Hawai‘i and the mainland U.S. from 1920 to 1929. Already the number of Filipino migrants had grown significantly. Between 1920 and 1924, a total of 29,226 traveled to Hawai‘i, as compared to 28,449 for all previous migration to Hawai‘i dating from 1907 to 1919. After the Johnson-Reed Act went into effect, that number rose even higher, with 44,404 Filipinos arriving in Hawai‘i between 1925 and 1929. Many of these eventually made their way to the mainland, along with an additional 40,000 Filipinos who embarked directly for the mainland. There, they concentrated in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Stockton, and Seattle.[97] Their increased visibility drew renewed scrutiny over U.S. imperial policy, even as immigration legislation encouraged their recruitment to fill the ranks of industry.

Migrants who traveled the circuits of U.S. colonial development not only exposed the contradictions of U.S. expansion, they also generated new political visions and social networks that challenged the U.S. empire. In the aftermath of the 1924 strike, several labor leaders were jailed or expelled from Hawai‘i. After serving two years in prison, Pablo Manlapit was paroled on the condition that he leave Hawai‘i. From there, he went to Los Angeles, where he published a Filipino newspaper, in which he editorialized on a number of issues pertaining to Filipino farm workers. Though he regularly spoke on behalf of Filipino workers in the United States and came into contact with Filipino labor leaders like Hilario C. Moncado, who founded the Filipino Federation of America, there is no evidence that he was involved in any major organizing drives in California. He did, however, become increasingly outspoken about Philippine independence, an issue in which he remained interested when he returned to Hawai‘i in 1930, whereupon he

[97] Lasker, *Filipino Immigration to Continental United States and to Hawaii,* 350-351.

resumed organizing Filipino workers in the Filipino Labor Union.[98] As time went on, Manlapit and others drew explicit connections between labor's challenges to capital and broader challenges to imperialism.

The strikes in Hawai'i were part of a growing labor militancy among Filipino workers across the U.S. empire. When Manlapit was exiled to California, Pedro Calosa, another organizer of the 1924 strike, returned to the Philippines, where he continued to organize Filipino workers. Born in 1897 in Bauang, La Union, a municipality in the Ilocos region of the Philippines, Calosa and his parents relocated to Pangasinan when he was a child. There, he claimed, he met Felipe Salvador, Apo Ipe, who served as a lifelong inspiration. He even stated that he came across Felipe Salvador in Hawai'i, despite Salvador's execution years earlier, explaining that Salvador's personality lived on and took different forms. In 1916, Calosa arrived in Hawai'i, working for a time at the Union Mill in North Kohala on the Hawai'i island. During the 1924 strike he was organizing workers on Maui, for which he spent nine months in prison. He was deported in 1926 and returned to his home in Tayug, Pangasinan.[99]

Around the time of Calosa's return, peasant uprisings were taking place all over the Philippines. Just one year earlier, an armed uprising had been thwarted in the nearby province of Nueva Ecija. Led by Pedro Kabola, the rebellion began with the formation in 1923 of a secret society of small farmers and tenants who had been victimized by land-grabbers and greedy caciques. By 1924, the secret society boasted some 12,000 members, who conspired to attack the municipal building of San Jose and execute the town officials. Kabola and his followers believed

[98] Melinda Tria Kerkvliet, *Unbending Cane: Pablo Manlapit, a Filipino Labor Leader in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 65-66.
[99] Much of what is known about Pedro Calosa's life comes from an interview taken by the historian David R. Sturtevant and the Filipino activist and author F. Sionil Jose, who also acted as interpreter. The interview is translated as Appendix B in Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 272. For an analysis of the interview, including Calosa's claim to have seen Salvador in Hawai'i long after his death, see Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 8-11.

that the uprising would trigger a mass rebellion of peasants across the country, who would expel all Americans and caciques from the Philippines and reapportion the lands among the poor. Constabulary troops discovered the conspiracy before it was carried out, arresting hundreds of members of the secret society and killing Kabola. Although an open revolt had been prevented, rural conditions continued to deteriorate, and more and more peasants across the Philippines were drawn to Colorum movements like Kabola's. In 1923 and 1924, Colorums in the province of Surigao, on the southern island of Mindanao, launched uprisings against Constabulary detachments in Samar, Leyte, and Agusan, sparking brutal repression campaigns supported by the U.S. military. In 1927, the flamboyant Florencio Entrencherado launched his Visaya-based movement by declaring himself Emperor of the Philippines and demanding a reduction of taxes, a redistribution of wealth, and a recognition of immediate independence. On May 13, 1927, followers of Entrencherado, many of them plantation workers, engaged in uprisings across the islands of Negros and Panay, destroying land deeds and tax records and attacking hacenderos.[100]

Though official reports and the Philippine press sensationalized the aspects of folk mysticism within the Colorums, each of the movements was grounded in growing dissatisfaction over the concentration of wealth and land. For all of their variation in ideology, leadership, and organizational structure, their memberships were all made up of Filipino peasants and the urban proletariat.[101] In Calosa's province of Pangasinan, peasant grievances had become particularly acute by the time of his return. Most of the arable lands were concentrated in the hands of two hacendero families. In 1928, Calosa formed the Philippine National Association, a Colorum group who counted among its ranks former members of thwarted Kabola uprising. In January 1931, Calosa and his followers attacked the town of Tayug, taking the Constabulary by surprise

[100] Constantino, *The Philippines*, 357-358; Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 167-170.
[101] Milagros C. Guerrero, "The Colorum Uprisings: 1924-1931," *Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1967): 66.

and burning the barracks. As in other Colorum movements, rioters raided the municipal building, setting tax records, land titles, debt records and tenancy contracts ablaze in a bonfire in the plaza. The uprising lasted less than a day, after which Constabulary reinforcements arrived to quell the rebellion.[102]

Local officials dismissed the Colorum movements as purely local affairs, the delusions of fanatical peasants, while the Philippine Constabulary was quick to link uprisings like the one in Tayug to communism, an increasingly common charge in the 1930s. Similarly, Hawaii's sugar planters attempted to dismiss the various labor movements as the work of "outside agitators," though most commentators on the subject have suggested, to the contrary, that Hawaii's labor disputes and labor movement were distinctly "homegrown." As Edward Beechert has argued: "The workers' efforts had emerged from the objective conditions of the major industries, not from any theoretical view of the world."[103] But for migrants like Calosa, the experience of migration across multiples sites of the U.S. empire fostered a new understanding of labor and anti-colonial struggles. This is reflected in peasants' own descriptions of why they participated in the Tayug uprising. Affairs like the Tayug uprising were, in fact, imperial in scope, reflecting much larger problems endemic to colonial expansion and capitalist development. As a newspaper reported, prisoners brought before court in the aftermath of the uprising maintained that they fought the Constabulary soldiers to secure liberty for the Philippines, enact a redistribution of lands, and bring about recognition of the Philippine Independent Church as the supreme religious organization in the country. As they understood it, independence, combined with the radical redistribution of wealth, was necessary to address the social ills of the Philippine countryside.[104]

[102] Constantino, *The Philippines,* 359-360; Guerrero, "The Colorum Uprisings," 69-71.
[103] Beechert, *Working in Hawaii,* 226.
[104] Guerrero, "The Colorum Uprisings,"73.

Conclusion

Filipino labor recruitment was part of a racial project of immigration, which lay at the heart of the U.S. empire in the early twentieth century. As immigration restrictions and Japanese labor organizing undermined planters' ability to control labor, state-sanctioned Filipino labor recruitment promised to bring about the orderly importation of workers while also fulfilling the paternalistic objectives of the insular government in the Philippines. But efforts to govern labor migration failed to contain Filipino migrants within the official channels forged by the demands of capital. Although designed to be orderly and controlled, Filipinos evaded and disrupted the HSPA's and the territorial government's efforts to delimit their movements, giving rise to new projects of labor mobilization and debates over Filipino mobility. Ultimately, debates about Filipino mobility—calls for labor recruitment and immigration restriction all designed to contain and exploit Filipino labor—legitimized and naturalized U.S. claims to sovereignty over the Philippines, Hawai‘i, and the Pacific Coast.

The recruitment of labor by the HSPA was one of the key practices through which the U.S. empire was articulated, a site of the overlapping objectives of capital and the state. Beginning with the annexation of the Hawaiian islands, U.S. efforts to govern immigration to Hawai‘i had reflected U.S. imperial ambitions to impose its order across the Pacific. Amid ongoing conflict within Hawai‘i over planters' control of public lands and mainland debates over the incorporation of the islands, the development and expansion of plantation agriculture served to solidify the tenuous land claims of Hawaii's planter class and to strengthen U.S. justifications for annexation. Hawaii's sugar planters capitalized on the unique status of Filipinos by importing them to work the plantations, establishing regular routes of enlistment, contract, and travel. By

the early 1920s, those frameworks—situated within a colonial model of development between the United States and the Philippines—had become so well established that the HSPA no longer needed to recruit laborers actively. Although mobility within this colonial economic framework was a condition of possibility for the exploitation of Filipinos, it also served as a means of resistance, the terrain of struggle over which U.S. imperial power was both asserted and contested. As sugar mobilized workers and capital across the Pacific, Filipino migrants engaged in a kind of politics of refusal, fostering an emergent counter-narrative to contest the U.S. empire, in the Philippines, in Hawai‘i, in California, and beyond.

Conclusion

In 1920, the price of sugar soared, setting off a wave of speculation in sugar production across the world, particularly in the cane-producing regions of Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. High prices drew private capital and public resources into developing and expanding sugar production in the Philippines—as well as in Cuba and Puerto Rico—and discouraged the development of other crops and industries, leaving working peoples in those regions with few alternatives outside of sugar production. The overdevelopment in a single sector also left sugar-exporting countries and territories extremely vulnerable to shifts in the trade policies, most notably by the United States and the United Kingdom, both of which had long used protective tariffs to promote and protect "domestic" sugar. As this dissertation has demonstrated, tariffs were one of the means by which the United States defined the "domestic" against the "foreign." As speculation in both sugarcane and sugar beets resulted in global over-production by the late-1920s, the United States and sugar-producing nations of Europe returned to protectionist policies to shield domestic producers from the precipitous decline in prices, mobilizing established distinctions between the foreign and the domestic to reconfigure U.S. imperial relations.[1]

The 1920s were a period of unprecedented prosperity for the sugar hacenderos of the Philippines. Prior to World War I, the average annual price of raw sugar in the New York market hovered between 3.5 cents and 4.5 cents per pound. With disruptions to European beet sugar production, prices soared in the aftermath of the war, reaching an all-time high of 20.8 cents per pound in 1920 and averaging more than 12 cents per pound for the entire year. Centrals, financed largely by capital from the U.S. mainland and Hawai‘i, encouraged the expansion of Philippine

[1] B. C. Swerling, *International Control of Sugar, 1918-41* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), 17.

sugar plantations, while inclusion within the U.S. tariff wall gave Philippine sugar duty-free access to the U.S. market. Growth in the sugar industry was so great that hacenderos and their allies in the Philippine government advocated the importation of labor from China and restrictions on Filipino migration to Hawai‘i.[2] Predictably, overproduction on a global scale caused prices to fall dramatically the following year, at times sinking below pre-war levels. The price recovered somewhat in 1923, reaching an average of 7 cents per pound, but from there began a slow and steady decline as the output of sugar exceeded demand, reaching as low as 2.6 cents per pound in 1932. But Philippine sugar producers not only continued to profit, they increased their exports by nearly fourfold between 1921 and 1934. The Philippines remained within the U.S. tariff wall, which was raised in 1916 and again in 1922, enabling hacenderos and mill owners to profit in the face of falling prices. At the same time, investments in new milling technology and improved cultivation methods lowered the overall cost of production. The increased efficiency and record profits came on the backs of plantation workers, who turned increasingly to messianic movements and secular labor organization in the 1920s as the vast disparity between hacenderos and the Philippine peasantry continued to grow.[3]

The fortunes of Philippine sugar fell off quickly in 1934. That year, two acts of Congress redefined the colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines. In March, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Tydings-McDuffie Act, which would establish the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935 and begin a ten-year period of transition to national independence. Even as independence was delayed, the law immediately reclassified

[2] John A. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 178.

[3] Philippine sugar exports grew from 289,876 metric tons in 1921 to a high of 1,152,841 in 1934, when the adjustments of the Jones-Costigan Act caused Philippine exports to fall dramatically in 1935. Numbers from Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 148-150; see also César J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 65.

Filipinos in the United States as aliens—and as aliens ineligible to citizenship—and set an extremely low immigration quota for the Philippines, allowing just fifty to immigrate to the United States each year. The Tydings-McDuffie Act, supported by an unusual coalition of beet sugar interests, racist politicians and their constituents, and Philippine nationalists, also limited the amount of refined and unrefined Philippine sugar allowed to enter the United States duty-free to 50,000 and 800,000 tons, respectively. A few months later, Congress enacted the Jones-Costigan Amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act, also known as the Sugar Act of 1934. The law added sugar to the list of basic commodities subject to controls under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. A New Deal measure meant to aid U.S. farmers during the Great Depression, the Sugar Act imposed protective tariffs on sugar imports, established strict quotas on sugar production, set minimum prices for producers, and regulated prices for consumers. Essentially, the quotas were designed to stabilize prices by limiting production based on an estimate of U.S. consumption. The heaviest restrictions fell on the Philippines, which saw its exports drop from over 1.1 million tons in 1934 to 516,233 in 1935. Rendered "foreign" for the purposes of immigration and trade, the Philippines remained firmly within the U.S. sphere of influence, a condition that would persist during and after the Commonwealth period.[4]

When the effects of the Great Depression hit Hawai'i, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) and the territorial government "repatriated" roughly 7,200 Filipinos in 1932 to relieve the growing burdens of unemployment.[5] Similar measures were enacted on the mainland against Filipinos and Mexicans. In the early 1930s, local and state relief agencies

[4] Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 202-203.
[5] The HSPA had ended active recruitment in 1927, though individuals continued to come to Hawai'i on their own in large numbers until 1931, when the Philippine government actively discouraged Filipino migration to Hawai'i in response to rising unemployment there. Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 253.

encouraged or coerced roughly 400,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans living in California and the Southwest to move to Mexico. State and federal relief agencies attempted similar repatriation efforts with the large Filipino population on the West Coast. The U.S. Congress enacted the Filipino Repatriation Act in 1935 to provide free transportation back to the Philippines, expecting ten to fifteen thousand Filipinos to take advantage of the program. Skeptical of the benefits of repatriation for themselves and their families, only 157 Filipinos returned in the program's first year and a little over 2,000 by the time it ended in 1941. World War II, however, dramatically altered attitudes toward Filipino and Mexican migrants.[6] In 1946, Hawaii's sugar planters abruptly shifted course to recruit 7,000 Ilocanos in an effort to break a massive, interethnic strike organized by the International Longshoremen's and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU). Although the Tydings-McDuffie Act had ended the open migration between the Philippines and the United States, the HSPA successfully lobbied for an exemption by claiming a shortage of labor. But the union mobilized quickly to organize the new recruits and ultimately won most of its demands through an interracial working-class movement in Hawai'i.[7]

Although the tried and true tactic of undermining labor organization by bringing in new laborers failed the sugar planters in the 1946 strike, the U.S. empire continued to operate through labor arrangements based on the principle of racial "uplift" that emerged from expansion into the Philippines. Before the HSPA's 1946 recruitment, the United States had begun to fill agricultural labor shortages on the mainland during World War II with "guest labor" from Mexico. Envisioned as a mutually beneficial program, the Bracero Program was initiated by the U.S. and

[6] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 72, 121-122.
[7] Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 172-173; Miriam Sharma, "Towards a Political Economy of Emigration from the Philippines," *Philippine Sociological Review* 35 no. 3-4 (1987): 15; Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 299.

Mexican governments in 1942 when the war effort drew many farm workers out of the fields and into America's military and defense industries. Drawing on the precedent of Filipino labor recruitment, the designers of the Bracero Program promoted the arrangement as an act of U.S. benevolence, which would mold Mexican migrants into modern laborers, with the idea that they would then return to transform the Mexican countryside with modern practices and technologies learned in the United States. But as with Filipino labor migration, the professed goals of modernization in the Bracero Program were undermined by the conditions of labor, which consigned them to the bottom rung of the labor hierarchy. Moreover, the consolidation of land in the hands of large Mexican agribusinesses rendered the goal of transforming Mexican peasants into a self-sufficient yeomanry unattainable for most participants in the program, repeating an established pattern—also visible in Hawai'i and the Philippines—that ensured the existence of a migrant proletariat.[8]

U.S. expansion disrupted the distinction between the "foreign" and "domestic," a tension that defined the U.S. empire as the United States repeatedly came into conflict with Indigenous nations, competing empires, and migrant workers. At the turn of the twentieth century, the acquisition of Spanish colonies and the annexation of Hawai'i heightened racist anxieties that Asian migrants threatened the American standard of living by undercutting white wage earners. But at a moment when industrialization was already closing traditional avenues of mobility for most white workers, consumerism increasingly displaced free labor ideals as the bastion of American liberalism, particularly as the employment of migrants made possible the greater

[8] In her study of the Bracero program, Deborah Cohen illustrates how the labor Braceros performed in the fields of the United States, and the conditions in which they lived on U.S. farms, were decidedly nonmodern. Moreover, agricultural practices and technologies in the United States were similar to those used in Mexico, undercutting the claims that Braceros would learn modern techniques. Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 143-144.

capitalization of western agricultural lands and a lower cost of food and other goods. Migrant labor, in other words, enabled the reproduction of whiteness even as U.S. expansion threatened to destabilize it, a contradiction at the heart of the U.S. empire. The racialization of migrants as "foreign" not only resolved that contradiction but also functioned as a means of disciplining labor. The deployment of various technologies of capital and the state defined the domestic and the foreign in a mutually racializing process that projected a U.S. imperial geography that naturalized California and the U.S. West as a "settled" part of the United States and cast Hawai'i and the Philippines as foreign.

As this dissertation has argued, the relinquishment of the Philippines as a U.S. colony, U.S. settlement efforts in Hawai'i, and ongoing economic development in the U.S. West unfolded together to naturalize and obscured the U.S. empire. Migrant labor has been essential to those processes that reproduced U.S. imperial relations. In particular, the racialization of migrant labor helped to maintain the fiction of the U.S. nation as white and settled. But across the U.S. empire, migrant workers have challenged the dominant order through peasant movements, organized labor, and Indigenous sovereignty movements.

In the anti-colonial movements that emerged as a result of World War I, questions of land were thoroughly imbricated with labor. While Prudencio Remigio, as Filipino commissioner in Hawai'i, insisted that Filipino labor should remain in the Philippines for the nationalist objective of developing the resources of the Philippines, Kānaka Maoli and Hawaii's sugar planters engaged in a renewed struggle over the Crown Lands of Hawai'i, and western states like California, Oregon, and Washington passed increasingly restrictive land legislation designed to prohibit Japanese from owning or leasing land. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the reorganization of land and labor for the production of sugar redefined the relationship of

Indigenous and working peoples to the land. In particular, the commodification of land produced race by leveraging ideas about land ownership and civilization. The supposed failure of Indigenous peoples and migrants to adapt to U.S. norms of land ownership made conquest appear as an inevitable outcome of capitalist development and justified the emergence of a migrant proletariat as a legitimate object of the U.S. imperial order. But the various forms of resistance to land legislation—including Japanese land ownership in California, movements by Kānaka Maoli to reclaim Crown Lands, and Filipino resistance to plantocracy—exposed and confronted the ongoing violence and overwhelming influence of the U.S. empire.

Focusing on the material practices of labor and land use, the story of sugar in the early twentieth century reveals that American capitalism cannot be understood independently of U.S. expansion. In the late nineteenth century, U.S. expansion brought Hawai‘i and the Spanish sugar-producing colonies of the Caribbean and the Pacific into U.S. markets, just as beet sugar promised to breathe new life into an ailing free labor ideal. Bringing those different labor systems together produced tensions and divisions, but upon closer inspection, the contradictions that emerged had less to do with competition between “domestic” (understood as white) and “foreign” workers. Rather, the contradictions stemmed from capital itself, particularly the tendencies toward monopolization and overproduction that culminated in the economic crisis of the 1930s. Ultimately, the crises in sugar production reflected broader crises in racial capitalism. Therein lay the struggles of migrant workers, in the cane fields of Hawai‘i and the Philippines and in the beet fields of California.

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