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Author

Kano, Matthew

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Race and the Philippine Question

By Matthew Kano

Introduction, 1521-1830

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a heated and protracted political debate over the “Philippine Question,” which related to the Philippine islands, its people, and their political status as a Spanish-ruled, American-ruled, and independent polity. In this paper, I will be discussing the historical background, ideological justifications and racial foundations of colonization of the Philippines. Specifically, I will be first discussing the historical interactions between the various peoples of the Philippines and European colonizers. After this contextual discussion, I will go over the racial and ideological foundations of American imperialism. Next, I will discuss the debate over American rule of the Philippines and the influence of racist beliefs in both sides of the debate. Lastly, I will discuss the process of Philippine independence on racist assumptions of civilizing the native populace and influences towards establishing institutions which were reflective of the imperialist rulers in order to grant the Philippines its freedom.

Inhabited since at least 3000 B.C.E., the various societies which developed on the islands often benefited from being situated on a trade route between India and China.¹ Because of this strategic location within a broader trading network, many Philippine island societies received significant cultural influence from China, India, and later, Arabia.² In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan tried to traverse the Visayan Islands in his attempt to circumnavigate the world. This was the first

¹ Truxillo, Charles A. 2012. *Crusaders in the Far East: The Moro Wars in the Philippines in the Context of the Ibero-Islamic World War*. Fremont, Calif.: Jain Pub. Company. 9-10.

² Trujillo, 9-10.

exposure to Europeans experienced by the local Visayans of the Philippine islands.³ Over the following decades, Spanish influence grew in the Philippines with many kingdoms converting to Christianity and joining the Spanish in their conflicts against the Islamic kingdoms in the region. This influence and power led to the Spanish gaining more territory within the Philippines.⁴ However, outsider forces such as the Ming Empire, Sultanate of Sulu and the Kingdom of the Netherlands also applied constant pressure to Spanish holdings.

After multiple failed expeditions in Southeast Asia and after the port of Manila was repeatedly raided by Dutch fleets, the Spanish shifted their efforts to solidifying their holdings on northern Philippine island of Luzon and withdrawing from the southern Philippine islands of Mindanao and Sulu. Spain was eventually able to conquer these islands and the Muslim Moro people by the middle of the 19th century. The situation in Europe had also significantly changed in the centuries which had followed the initial settlement and expansion of control over the Philippines. The Kingdom of France had been overthrown by revolutionaries in 1789, and Napoleon came to power as the new leader of France ten years later. This new French Empire invaded Spain in November 1807. The combined armies of the UK, Spain and Portugal were unable to prevent the French from taking over most of the country and installing the brother of Napoleon as the new king. Due to the loss of most of their home territories, various parts of the Spanish Empire In South America revolted during the period in which the Spanish king was living in exile. By 1814, the French Empire and its puppet Spanish government were forced out of the Iberian Peninsula. This did not stop the revolutionaries in New Spain however. During the period of exile from Spain, the various revolutionary groups in South America had set up their own constitutional governments. By the end of the 1820s, Spain had lost most of her empire at

³ Trujillo, 9-10.

⁴ Truxillo, 9-10.

that point due to mounting costs in trying to put down the several rebellions which were active at the time. The Spanish Empire was pushed to near collapse with its only major holdings being in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines still within their control.

An Expansion of Interests 1830-1898

During the early 19th century, the foundations in the necessity of colonization and imperialism were used to justify the subjugation of indigenous and native peoples around the world. By the middle of the 19th century, multiple European nations had been rushing to expand their empires such as the French, British and Russians in China. America had also decided to begin expanding her interests in Asia as well, ending the closed country policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate. She also received significant privileges, including the ability to refuel and resupply her ships along with a treaty of extraterritoriality. After the Civil War, these interests grew to China as well, participating in trade and investment within the city of Tianjin. The nature of the American interests in the Caribbean and Pacific were borne of the natural expansion of Manifest Destiny's domain and economic opportunity. After the North American continent was claimed by all those whom the Americans recognized as, if not equal, a diplomatic entity in the region, the next steps were directed abroad. The United States had already laid claim to the Western Hemisphere as its sphere of influence with the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. President James Monroe had announced this policy during an annual speech to Congress while in discussions with diplomats of the Russian Empire. Specifically stating that "In the discussions to which this interest has given rise, and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent

condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power.”⁵ Entering the last decade of the 19th century, the United States had the military power to enforce this doctrine. The United States’ naval expansion was the backbone of this increase in military force. The military was the preeminent form of Manifest Destiny. Its use to expel the natives of America and suppress any attempts to resist paved the way for the development of American expansion through military conquest. Because of its position in American foreign policy, the primacy of its development was necessary for America to expand her interests towards those who she believed needed to be civilized.

In the later half of the 19th century, Congress started funding a naval modernization and expansion effort in response to the rapidly modernizing of naval forces in Europe to expand the reach of their imperial influence and power. In addition to this power, the United States became more diplomatically active on the international stage, beginning in 1893 with the recognition of the newly founded Republic of Hawaii which was made up of business interests in the Hawaiian Islands.⁶ In response to the successful coup, the United States used its newly created naval and diplomatic influence to annex the new republic before any other state could intervene. This process of using economic entities and protection of their property, assets and other interests was often used by the US to justify military action against indigenous tribes and as a form of

⁵ Congress.gov. "President's Annual Message - Page Headings - Annals of Congress." February 18, 2026. <https://www.congress.gov/annals-of-congress/page-headings/18th-congress/president-s-annual-message/45799>.

⁶ “U.S. Industrialization and Naval Technology before the Spanish-American War.” n.d. The Sextant. <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/Recent/Article-View/Article/3425958/us-industrialization-and-naval-technology-before-the-spanish-american-war/>.

expansion through the settlement of land related to the parceling out of land that was now under the control of the US' Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Philippines had been used by the Spanish colonial authorities as a land with which to grow agricultural goods which were to be processed on the islands and shipped either back to Spain or the wider global markets. These goods were often procured by the Encomienda system.⁷ This system provided a form of political and economic control over the majority of the Philippines through the power which was held by the Spanish crown.⁸ Many of the political elites in the country were attached to those who had been able to gain land holding rights. This system of using the native Filipino population to administer the system which drew out these goods without providing for the population of the Philippines beyond basic subsistence led to significant issues within the populace due to abuse at the hand of officials from both local and Spanish authorities. The Spanish government and crown knew of the various abuses which had been growing under the colonial authorities' watch during their administration of the Philippines.⁹ These abuses became a growing issue which drove discontent with Spanish colonial rule.

Two years later, in 1895, the British and Venezuelans disputed the border region of Esequibo. The border region was not properly surveyed at the time when the original borders between Venezuela and British Guyana were set, creating an issue related to the actual territorial holdings of each state. As neither side accepted the other's interpretation on the matter, there was

⁷ Anderson, Eric. 1976. "THE ENCOMIENDA in EARLY PHILIPPINE COLONIAL HISTORY." <https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-14-2-1976/anderson-encomienda-philippine-history.pdf>. : 27

⁸ Anderson, 27.

⁹ Anderson, 30-31.

a significant diplomatic incident over the disputed territory. The American government intervened in the affairs of South America again, this time under a new interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine promulgated by Secretary of State Richard Olney. Olney argued that the Monroe Doctrine did not just apply to further colonial aspirations of other powers outside of the Western Hemisphere. It also applied to any disputes that arose between states which resided inside of the Western Hemisphere and states which resided outside of the Western Hemisphere. From this interpretation, Olney argued that the United States should intervene as a neutral negotiator in the territorial dispute and force both parties to negotiate.¹⁰ The United States now had a reason to intervene in any dispute or conflict in the Western Hemisphere between a party located in the Western Hemisphere and a European party. This became one of the main arguments that the US used to justify its intervention in Cuba three years later.

To Hell with Spain, 1898

The United States positioned itself as the paternalistic protector of the New World from European powers. At the same time, it also believed it had the right to use force to protect those who were deemed to be under threat by European empires. The same year that the British and Venezuela started feuding over Esequibo, another dispute that had been brewing for decades turned to violence for its conclusion. Cuban elites, freedmen, middle-class workers, farmers and others took up arms against the Spanish authorities for the third time in as many decades to fight for their independence. This uprising was more methodical in nature, able to defeat superior Spanish numbers in a war of attrition upon which colonial authorities resorted to harsh repression to counter. The news of these policies were reaching American newspapers daily, driving public

¹⁰ Young, George B. "Intervention Under the Monroe Doctrine: The Olney Corollary." *Political Science Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1942): 247–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2143553>.

desires to intervene. As the repression grew in Cuba, the US was forced to respond. The armored cruiser USS Maine, a product of the American naval expansion, was deployed to Havana to evacuate Americans and protect their property due to civil unrest in Havana. When the Maine exploded in harbor, those who saw an opportunity to help Cuba pressed society to demand war. The United States was going to fight.

As the revolution in Cuba was occurring, a similar revolution was taking place in the Philippines with similar grievances from the revolutionaries and similar repression tactics by Spanish authorities. However, this conflict was not as widely covered in America and therefore, was not of major interest to the American public. By the end of 1897, the revolution was put down by colonial authorities. Its leaders were forced into exile as a result of negotiations. However, American involvement in Cuba also promoted the cause of the revolutionaries. Before the war broke out, the US Navy's Pacific Squadron was forward deployed to Hong Kong in preparation for hostilities. Within a week of hostilities beginning, the Spanish forces in the Philippines were without a navy as Commodore George Dewey decisively ambushed the Spanish Pacific fleet in Manila Bay. Philippine revolutionaries took advantage of this and began a second uprising against the Spanish colonial authorities. This second uprising was more successful with American cooperation. Within a year, Spanish authorities surrendered and with the success of American forces in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Spain was forced to surrender. The final Treaty of Paris granted Cuban independence on paper, in practice the nation was under American supervision. The treaty also granted America the Spanish West Indies, Guam and the Philippines in exchange for a one-time payment of \$20 million to Spain. Despite being affected by the treaty, the Philippine delegation was denied the ability to participate.

Rawlein Soberano, a Filipino historian, found that in the wake of the Spanish surrender, the American interest in occupation or full annexation of the Philippines was multifaceted.¹¹ For many diplomats, the potential of a Filipino member of their sphere of influence in Asia was too good to pass on. Japan, Russia and the United Kingdom had all declared various levels of interest in controlling the Philippines.¹² Some officials in the Philippines also wished to be protected from non-American foreign influence and potential annexation.¹³ Soberano noted that one of the most important reasons to hold the Philippines as a territory of the United States was providing it with the access to the largest markets in the world of China, Japan and India. As this potential use of the Philippine Islands gained attention within the business community, the opinions of it changed from one of pacifism to one of annexation. The opportunity for trade and profit was much too large to pass up for the business sector and the Philippines was positioned in the right spot for it.¹⁴

The Imperial Question, 1899-1900

An American administration of the Philippines was extremely controversial due to debates over the necessity of American colonies in Asia. Supporters against American presence in the Philippines were vocal in the need for an independent Filipino state. Supporters of American rule over the Philippines argued for the need of American paternalistic protection and racially-influenced education for the indigenous people of the Philippines. Filipino self-

¹¹ Soberano, Rawlein. "The American debate on Philippine annexation at the turn of the century, 1898–1900." *Asian Stud J Crit Perspect Asia* 12, no. 1 (1974): 39-51.

¹² Soberano, 40.

¹³ Soberano, 41.

¹⁴ Soberano, 42.

determination was a very important consideration as a part of negotiations in the wake of the Treaty of Paris. Some of those who argued for immediate independence argued on the basis of the various powers upon which were granted to the federal government. Others argued that the US was not meant to become an imperial power similar to the European powers who were increasing their empires and often clashing with each other. Some however viewed the situation as an opportunity to further civilize not only the newly gained territories but also America itself. These discussions were held on the notion that the future of the Philippines was to be decided on the basis of American interests and decisions, rather than on the actual desires and wishes of a prospective Philippine government.

An argument which was raised by Senator William G. Brantley in a speech made to the House of Representatives on Feb. 22, 1900 was on the Constitution. More specifically, he raised the issues of the powers granted to the American government with regards to forming colonies outside of the territory of the United States. The government did not have the power in the Constitution to form colonies or grant the charter for a colony. As the United States grew to become an imperial power of her own, the desire to further subjugate grew as well. The expansion of the United States created a path in which it starts becoming a tyrannical ruler no different to the British. She had no reason to expand her interests into the Pacific.¹⁵

Another issue Sen. Brantley raised was the ideological conflict which was raised with starting a colonial affair. The United States was founded as a union of former colonies. It also was dedicated in its ideological foundations to be a force for freedom and civilization around the world. The subordination of another people to exploitation not too dissimilar to what the Americans faced in the run up to 1776 gave some a bad taste in their mouths. Another was the

¹⁵ Brantley, William G, and Congressional Speech Collection. What is to be done with the Philippines?. [Washington.: Govt. print. off, 1900] Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/01004550/>.

nature of the subordination. The Spanish-American War was fought in part as an intervention on behalf of the Cubans who were fighting for their independence. Subjugating another people who were fighting for their independence rendered the war ideologically contentious.¹⁶

Another issue was the logistics of ruling the Philippines. The Pacific Ocean imparted a Tyranny of Distance upon any endeavor to administer the Philippines. Any resources be dedicated to such an endeavor automatically required resources from other efforts, such as naval expansion, to be dedicated to the colonial administration. This compromise was one which Sen. Brantley brought up as a potential problem for any efforts to establish American rule in the Philippines. No official strategy or policy with regards to the administration of the Philippines had been published by the McKinley administration up to this point. The more pressing matter was the still-raging Philippine insurgency which made any form of governance or stabilization impossible. This violence continued to drag America further towards becoming an imperialist state.¹⁷

The Philippine insurgency had existed for multiple years before the Americans had been ceded the territory of the Philippines and the Moro people. As American administration came into effect and the possibility of independence became null, the insurgency began going after American forces and local allies of the Americans. The insurgency was ineffective at fighting in open battles against the American forces and started to resort to guerilla tactics. The lack of an overt policy or strategy by the McKinley administration made many of his critics wary of a prolonged war in the Philippines for no official purpose. Sen. Brantley demanded that the McKinley administration make an official statement on the nation's interests and objectives

¹⁶ Brantley, 7.

¹⁷ Brantley, 8.

going forward with regards to the potential administration of the Philippines. More specifically, he states that the United States must keep the Philippines independent in the same way that the United States had guaranteed the independence of Cuba.

A couple days before Sen. Brantley's speech, Senator Champ Clark made a speech also on the issues related to the potential future of the Philippines under American administration. However, he brings up some issues that Sen. Brantley does not mention in his speech. Sen. Clark argues that the longer the insurgency in the Philippines lasts, the more power the President gains. Congress is losing more and more of its authority as the fighting continues without Congressional approval and on the specific request of President McKinley. If the war continues, it will create a precedent for future presidents to deploy military forces abroad and declare war on foreign nations without the approval of Congress. The other argument Sen. Clark focuses on is the issues of Filipino integration into the US.¹⁸

To frame this as an introspective moment in American history is a mistaken effort however. These objections were often made upon the concept that the US had to eventually grant American citizenship to all those who lived in the Philippines. At the time, most people in the United States disagreed with the potential admission of the Philippines into the union as a state on racial grounds. The Filipinos must also be "civilized" if the United States is to be successful in the Philippines. The Philippine government was also to be created as a copy of the American government, representing the newly civilized Filipinos. Later on in the speech, Sen. Brantley makes the argument that the only way that American administration of the Philippines could occur is if at some point in the future, the Filipinos were to be granted American citizenship. The Filipino was not be able to assimilate into America as an equal due to their racial and cultural

¹⁸ Clark, Champ, and Congressional Speech Collection. The Philippine problem. [Washington.: Govt. print. off, 1900] Image. <https://www.loc.gov/item/01004864/>.

characteristics. In the best interests of the Filipinos and Americans, the Philippines needed to remain independent.¹⁹ Sen. Clark made more practical arguments against American rule of the Philippines, stating that the life of one white man was not worth the lives of all the Filipinos combined. The war needed to end in order to prevent the further ending of white lives. As resources are being dedicated to suppressing the Philippine insurgency, those resources are not being dedicated to his constituents. The growing imperialism of the United States will grow the resource sink upon which the future of America will be spent. To prevent this, the United States must withdraw from the Philippines as soon as is feasible.²⁰

The problems of injustices in the South with lynchings and unrest in the North between religious groups which were occurring at the time are more pressing issues than the potential of an imperialist venture in the Philippines. To emphasize the resources needed on the venture, Sen. Clark deliberated on the amount of money needed to pacify the Philippines so far and how much more money needed to be dedicated in order to put down the insurgency. The actions which were being performed in the pursuit of imperialism is anathema in Sen. Clark's opinion to the American values of civilization that Sen. Clark was arguing needed to be protected.²¹ These values of freedom and liberty were to come under attack if the Philippines was to be admitted to the United States as a state in a similar manner to many of the other states which had joined the union after independence. The Filipinos were an inherent danger to the American, whether colored, Indian or white, in their population of nearly twelve million. The Filipinos work at a

¹⁹ Brantley, 17.

²⁰ Clark, 1.

²¹ Clark, 7.

lower wage. Their employment will drive all of America into poverty as they drove Americans out of labor. The culture of the Filipino turns America into a savage land.²²

Some in Congress supported the measure of Philippine annexation, however. Representative George White, the last black representative elected in North Carolina until 1992, pushed for annexation of the Philippines on the basis of social equality and the need to protect the values of the United States.²³ Rep. Smith went as far in his speech as to say that to not annex the Philippines was an injustice to the Filipino people. In response to messages for the immediate relinquishing of governance, Smith argues that the Army needs to be expanded to fight the insurgency in the Philippines and be prepared for another crisis if it develops. Rep. Smith had supported the previous bills for expansion of the military and voted for a declaration of war on Spain in the wake of the USS Maine disaster.²⁴ He also touches upon the active oppression of blacks in America during his speech, pointing out the various hypocrisies of white Southern representatives who are advocating for Philippine independence while actively disenfranchising black voters in their districts and passing laws which restrict the freedom of black people. Openly calling for these laws to be dispensed for their unconstitutionality, he argues that when the blacks are given a fair shot in American society, they will be just as smart and wealthy as whites.²⁵ He then points to the issues in society which are exacerbated by the lack of action by the government and that he believes America can solve these issues. The push for the

²² Clark, 2.

²³ White, George H, and Daniel Murray Pamphlet Collection. Army reorganization: speech of Hon. George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, Thursday. [Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1899] Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/91898498/>.

²⁴ White, 3.

²⁵ White, 7-9.

government to allow all those who are citizens of the United States to exercise their freedoms as Americans is a beneficial part of civilization.²⁶

Rep. Smith finishes his speech by pushing for equal rights for all in America and the expansion of America to spread her values and civilization. The United States must defeat all injustice where it may exist and protect those who are oppressed. This push of equality for all in conjunction with a demand for the imperial expansion of the United States is something that is common through American justifications of their foreign policy. In the leadup to the USS Maine disaster, the American public demanded that President McKinley intervene in Cuba's revolution in order to protect the Cubans from Spanish oppression. Rep. Smith is expanding this justification beyond the Cubans and applying it to all those that America deems oppressed.²⁷

A Process of Preparation 1900-1934

The period of American rule over the Philippines came with significant changes to the Filipino people. These changes were made specifically to create a Filipino society which was a copy of American society, imprinting various beliefs and notions of a functioning society which were order specifically to prove that the Philippines had become "civilized" enough to justify their independence to their colonial masters. Many racial influences affected the consideration of the potential independent Filipino state, with many in the United States pressing for Philippine independence in fear of Filipino presence in the United States and the potential of competition in the workforce from Filipino labor. The military rule of the Philippines by a military governor ended in 1902 with the passage of the Philippine Organic Act, while the insurgency lasted until

²⁶ White, 10.

²⁷ White, 12-15.

1904. However, before the Philippines could receive its own government, President McKinley wanted to understand what the situation was in the Philippines. As the conflict in the Philippines was winding down, he dispatched a five-man commission to the Philippines to investigate the conditions of people and make recommendations as to what a Philippine government looked like. The First Philippine Commission found that a switch to a civilian government as soon as could be arranged was preferable with a bicameral legislature. In practice, this government followed the findings of the First Philippine Commission and established a civilian government but with significant American oversight. The government which was formed originally contained only five Americans who were chosen by the president to lead the Commission as its upper house and held elections in 1907 for the Philippine Assembly. The executive was headed by an American chosen by the President to serve as Governor-General. Later on, the Commission gained Filipino members. The lower and upper house shared its powers but the Commission reserved the powers to make legislation which applied to those who were non-Christian.

In 1913, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill which handed over complete administration of Filipino affairs to a native government, removing the Philippine Commission. The bill sat in the Senate for two years and in the early days of 1916, the Jones Act was passed by the Senate. On August 29, President Wilson signed the bill into law, granting the ability of the Filipinos to elect both houses of their congress. However, the American Governor-General still had the final say as to what specifically they believed was in the best interest of the American and Filipino people. In 1919, the Philippine Assembly officially sent a diplomatic mission led by Manuel Quezon to the United States. Its goal was to argue for the independence of the Philippines. The diplomatic mission traveled to Washington D.C. and was received by the American government and a hearing by Congress on the matter. During the hearings, Quezon

was pressed by various members of Congress as to the willingness of the Filipinos to govern themselves in the absence of American leadership and protection. Historian Honesto Villanueva argues that Quezon presented various bills of legislation which affirmed the desire of the Filipino people to govern themselves and responded in a satisfactory manner to assuage fears of a potential hostile takeover or collapse of order upon independence.²⁸ However, in 1920, the Democrat candidate James Cox lost the presidential election to the Republican Warren Harding. One of the major issues between the Democratic Party and Republican Party since President McKinley was the Philippine Problem. The Democratic Party had pushed for independence while the Republican Party argued first for annexation and then later for continued governance.²⁹ As a result of his victory, President Harding issued a new commission to investigate whether or not the Philippines was capable of self-government.

The Wood-Forbes Mission, headed by Cameron Forbes and Leonard Wood, investigated the conditions of the local government and its abilities to operate in the event of independence. Their findings were issued in October 1921 to the disdain of the Filipino government. Their findings found that the people of the Philippines were content and aware of benefits held under American rule and they were also prosperous.³⁰ The supporters of independence in the Philippines did not understand the current situation of Filipino independence without American protection or supervision. Those who did support independence were typically Christian and

²⁸ Villanueva, Honesto. n.d. "THE INDEPENDENCE MISSION 1919: INDEPENDENCE LIES AHEAD." <https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-09-03-1971/villanueva-independence%20mission%201919%20.pdf>.

²⁹ Villanueva, 306.

³⁰ United States Special Mission Of Investigation To The Philippine Islands, and Leonard Wood. Report of the Special mission on investigation to the Philippine Islands to the secretary of war. Washington, Govt. print. off, 1921. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/21027544/>.

those who did not support independence were either non-Christian or Americans. The civil service of the Philippines is competent but lack of oversight and experience makes it inefficient. The report also mentioned that this was not due to an inherent inferiority of the Filipino but rather a lack of experience. Because of the lack of experience and oversight, the Filipinos were not ready for independence.³¹

The report's recommendations suggested in the event of a deadlock between the Governor-General and Senate, the President should have the final say, the Jones Act should be repealed and that the American government should hold ultimate authority in affairs of the Philippines until they are ready to be granted independence.³² The findings of the report were convenient for President Harding, as he did not desire to grant further autonomy to the Philippines, let alone grant them independence.³³ His successors, Presidents Coolidge and Hoover, attempted to prevent the independence of the Philippines. In one event, President Hoover vetoed the Hare Act in an attempt to prevent the Senate from allowing the Philippines to begin the transition to an independent state.

Many groups over the next decade pushed for Filipino independence, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL). According to historian James Lawrence, the AFL was first interested in the Philippine Question due to the lack of unions and safe working conditions in the Philippines along with the competition that Filipino labor created.³⁴ As a response to the lower cost of Filipino goods, the AFL began lobbying for import tariffs on Filipino goods and Filipino

³¹ United States, 45.

³² United States, 46.

³³ Villanueva, 306.

³⁴ James R. Lawrence (1966) The American federation of labor and the Philippine independence question, 1920–1935, *Labor History*, 7:1, 63-69.

independence, not out of desire to liberate Filipinos but rather due to competition they represent.³⁵ By 1929, Filipinos were arriving in the United States on the West Coast for jobs related to agricultural labor. West Coast representatives began lobbying for the AFL to push for Filipino exclusion from the United States. This measure is not completely popular with the entirety of the AFL but independence is still supported. If independence were to be granted, lobbying began for Filipino exclusion and the shortest possible time as possible until the Philippines became independent to prevent as many Filipinos from coming to the US as possible.³⁶ However, by 1932, the AFL had recognized that the Philippines was going to become independent eventually. As this occurred, the AFL dropped all lobbying efforts on the Philippine Question.³⁷ The competition between laborers of the Philippines and America was based on a fear of a loss of work and a loss of cultural homogeneity. Despite the fears not being founded, they were able to push the largest association of unions in the United States to pressure the government to sever all ties with the Philippines as soon as it could. Despite the pushes of many in the Philippines and United States to show the Filipino people as capable of government, prejudice and fear surrounding them existed well past the end of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1946.

Conclusions and Findings

The imperial project of the United States in the Philippines was one of racial supremacy, forcing those who they subjugated to achieve an arbitrary standard upon which they granted the

³⁵Lawrence, 64.

³⁶ Lawrence, 67-68.

³⁷ Lawrence, 69.

status of civilized and of economic competition. The Philippines is still dealing with these effects 79 years later. Despite the best attempts by many groups in the United States, Filipino Americans now comprise a significant minority within the workforce of the US. They are also considered one of the wealthiest groups in the United States by household income per year.

The expansion of powers that was given to President McKinley during this period of time, granted due to the odd nature of the insurgency in the Philippines, became very controversial even after his assassination and the swearing in of President Theodore Roosevelt. Under Theodore Roosevelt's administration, he used the military to acquire further territory for the growing American empire, through invasion of Colombia in order to get land for the building of the Panama Canal. Due to the influence that the US held over Cuba, they invaded the country again in 1906 in another operation to stabilize the country. This operation, similar to the deployments in the Philippines during their insurgency, was not signed off by Congress and instead made upon the sole order of the President. This form of military intervention became a major part of American foreign policy up to today. These powers are significant to the modern form of American foreign policy. Many military operations that the United States embarked upon in the following century were based upon this power that President McKinley first exercised in suppressing the independence movements in the Philippines. On multiple occasions, the United States used military forces to protect and/or enforce American interests. This policy was invoked during periods of civil conflict in Mexico, when American forces fought bandits or Mexican forces by violating Mexican territorial borders and deploy in Mexican territory. In Haiti and the Dominican Republic, American forces were used to stabilize the civil situation in pursuit of American interests. During the Cold War, this policy was expanded, most well known in Vietnam prior to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution when military advisors and covert forces were

sent without Congressional approval to South Vietnam, Thailand and other countries in the region who were considered anti-Communist.

The effects of American colonization in the Philippines can still be seen in the various cultural and political institutions which are prevalent within Filipino society. English proficiency, the justice system and significant connections with Filipinos in America, often with permanent residence or citizenship and employment. With these successes, Filipinos still face significant problems both in the United States and the Philippines. Political instability and violence threaten Filipino communities inside the Philippines and the United States, especially those who are impoverished and/or undocumented. Increasing hostility towards both foreigners and those who aren't white within also endanger Filipinos who are living and working in the United States. Increased deportations in recent months also threaten these communities and endanger those who are most vulnerable. Further crackdowns on the undocumented are a significant issue in the immediate future within communities of those who either reside in the United States or are Americans of Filipino heritage.