



Sarah Steinbock-Pratt. *Educating the Empire: American Teachers and Contested Colonization in the Philippines.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 390 pp. \$120.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-108-47312-5.

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Scholars have recently returned their gaze toward the role of public education in defining the nation, citizenship, and imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[1] Sarah Steinbock-Pratt adds to the conversation by exploring American civilian educators' contributions in shaping American imperialism in the Philippines. In *Educating the Empire*, she explores "how education contributed to the creation of US empire in the Philippines, and the ways that this colonial project was formed through the contests and collaborations of a variety of actors with different goals and desires, which in turn indelibly shaped the counters of colonization" (p. 5). For Steinbock-Pratt, colonial authority was created in schoolhouses and private homes and not solely in government offices. Race, gender, class, nationality, and imperial position mattered in defining educators' experiences and their degrees of influence over the colonial project to the chagrin of colonial bureaucrats. "As imperial mediators," Steinbock-Pratt argues, American civilian educators "negotiated with both state officials and people on the ground to enact a colonialism shaped by multiple and conflicting impulses and intentions" (pp. 24-25). These collective interactions produced mixed legacy of American imperialism in the Philippines.

The opening chapter explores the ways that American educators constructed a "catalog of colonial knowledge" for setting their expectations (p. 27). Thus, pre-travel Western biases formed the foundational narrative of "colonial education and state-building, at times, to the consternation of officials in Manila" (p. 27). When civilian educators arrived, they did not encounter a barren educational field. Rather, they found a populace with a knowledge and understanding of Western colonial education models. Army schools taught by black and white soldiers initiated the Americanizing process. American colonial policy mandates for English-only instruction, however, dictated the employment of civilian American educators. After an extensive demographic survey, Steinbock-Pratt reveals that educators' pre-departure preparations consisted of San Francisco Chinatown tours, educational lectures, and other social activities. In addition to contemporary notions of racial hierarchy, these activities created their catalog of colonial knowledge. They leveraged this ever-expanding knowledge and asserted their expertise for defining the colonial project. Through contestations and negotiations, colonial officials and educators constructed a colonial state through education of Filipino citizens.

Over the next three chapters, Steinbock-Pratt outlines the main thrust of her argument over the

creation of the colonial state by colonial officials, educators, and Filipino subjects. Starting with the second chapter, she demonstrates how colonial official policy of fitness, imbued with notions of racial, gender, classist, and nationalistic hierarchies, failed when “enacted on the ground” and ultimately allowed for “greater variety of who was able to access positions within the empire” (p. 51). In part, colonial officials underestimated the white women, African American educators, and American-style-educated Filipinos employed. They found empowerment through upending presumed hierarchies and challenging colonial officials. Despite conflict and policy changes, Steinbock-Pratt contends, the number of women employed remained consistently steady throughout the period under examination. In an era of increased feminization of the teaching force in the United States, it remains unclear following this discussion why colonial officials had ambivalence to their employment. Interestingly, turn-of-the-twentieth-century African American educational debates also influenced which African Americans initially served in the Philippines. Steinbock-Pratt demonstrates that notions of racial hierarchy and the creation of a tiered imperial citizenship mirrored contemporary American hierarchies shaping domestic public schooling. Few black educators secured appointments. Filipino educators also served in a limited capacity initially. They, too, expanded their position. Often graduates with Americanized education, the early Filipino educators expected the same access within the imperial system and challenged contrary policies.

Co-opting the language of fitness, educators asserted new identities and understandings that challenged race, class, gender, and nationality in the Philippines and at home. Here, Steinbock-Pratt’s mastery of diverse archival sources is on full display. White men often had their expectation of professional advancement unfulfilled. In contrast, white women proved their independence and leadership capabilities in and outside of the classroom. Her rich analysis adds to recent schol-

arly discussions regarding the ways that late nineteenth-century American women’s education empowered students and alumnae to consider themselves as race leaders. While not fully explored in the text, this educational development extended beyond national boundaries to the Pacific colony. [2] Likewise, African American men and women had similar motivations to their white counterparts but with the added expectation of racial uplift for themselves, Filipinos, and African Americans at home. John Henry Manning Butler, and Carter G. Woodson, as shown by Steinbock-Pratt, positioned themselves as American citizens and not racial inferiors who were “best suited to carry out the project of Americanization” (p. 101).

The fourth chapter convincingly demonstrates how the creation of race, specifically whiteness, blackness, and Filipinoness became important, and yet elastic colonial designations. Steinbock-Pratt sheds light on the process whereby “nationality was racialized and race was nationalized” (p. 134). Whiteness expands. Gilbert S. Perez and other passing African Americans transformed their racial identity and achieved self-invention. Some white men felt a loss of privilege by marrying Filipinas. This perceived loss increased the policing against these racial offenses. Claims of American identity and nationality also disrupted notions of blackness. Since traditional color conventions lacked meaning, African Americans articulated rights denied them at home. Steinbock-Pratt contends that they took advantage of the adverse consequences posed by sustaining domestically accepted racial discrimination for the colonial project. Furthermore, African American and Filipinos had better relations, as evidenced by intermarriage and a shared nonwhite identity. Instead of race, education, class, and imperial status became important markers of distinction.

Textbooks and curriculum, as demonstrated in the fifth chapter, prepared Filipinos to become assimilated but never equal imperial citizens. American educators had a dual role of educating

students and making their uplift work visible to local communities. Curricular decisions, however, reflected American disciplinary body-centered pedagogy and colonial expectations for racial subordination with a vocational curriculum domestically used in the schooling of Native Americans, African Americans, and other racialized American communities. Originally, religious affiliation determined curriculum. Steinbock-Pratt shows how Christian Filipinos received the classical model while non-Christian Filipinos received an industrial model curriculum. Over time, the curricular differences shrank as the industrial education spread across the entire system. White educators embraced colonial officials' understandings of Filipinos' capacity for self-governance. While more positive than their white counterparts, African American educators still articulated gendered American language to describe Filipinos' capacity for self-governance. These differences affected their reception by students, parents, and communities and encouraged Filipino nationalism, especially in secondary and postsecondary schools. Eventually, Filipino educators replaced the American teaching force and closed this unique period of opportunity for American educators.

Beyond the classroom, educators had an essential role in sustaining American imperial contact in the individual homes and communities. This sixth chapter permits Steinbock-Pratt to fully develop her subargument regarding the sustained and most direct American imperial contact. Intimacy proved essential to defining state authority. Both educators and Filipino community members understood their power was limited without military backing and the support of local provincial governors. Still, educators did function as colonial arbiters in local affairs. Steinbock-Pratt demonstrates that some social interactions disrupted power dynamics but other interactions, specifically the employment of Filipino domestic servants, often maintained hierarchy. All interactions proved fraught.

As shown in the final chapter, the fully implemented Filipino teaching force shaped the political discourse over nationalism, independence, and demise of the colonial regime. This crucial refashioning of their Americanized education revealed the unintended consequences of the colonial project. Colonial rhetoric of unfitness and American teachers' outright racism fueled student protest. In an attempt to stem student activism, colonial directives had the opposite effects. Students increasingly demanded dignity, self-determination, and independence. Even the rollback of Filipinization under the Harding administration, according to Steinbock-Pratt, further radicalized students, who now had a significant presence in the independence movement.

Setting the path toward full independence, Filipino teachers replaced all American educators. Former American educators either ended their service or transitioned to educating other marginalized populations. African American educators often continued their racial uplift work through the formation of new organizations, such as the Association of the Study for Negro Life and History (ASNLH) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Independence, as a result, produced a complex and ambivalent legacy.

Overall, *Educating the Empire* offers a comprehensive and insightful examination on the role of education in the American colonial project in the Philippines. Readers will appreciate Steinbock-Pratt's careful attention to the overlapping forces of race, gender, and nationality in shaping the development of the colonial state and how Filipinos refashioned their education in their struggle for self-governance and independence. At times, readers might desire clearer connections between the colonial system and other American educational systems for marginalized domestic communities. In other words, did the marginalized Americans' domestic struggles influence their Filipino counterparts and vice versa in the American imperial edu-

cational project during this era? Nonetheless, this work is a fine addition to the field and will appeal to diverse scholars and students.

Notes

[1]. See Clif Stratton, *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); and John R. Gram, *Education at the End of Empire: Negotiating Pueblo Identity in New Mexico's Indian Boarding Schools* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

[2]. See Sarah H. Case, *Leaders of Their Race: Educating Black and White Women in the New South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); and Jewel A. Smith, *Transforming Women's Education: Liberal Arts and Music in Female Seminaries* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

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