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Article

GEORGE B. RADICS

Transforming the "Lazy Native": Race, American Colonial Education, and Violence against Minorities in the Philippines

Abstract

Syed Hussein Alatas argues that the image of the "lazy native" emerged as a means to subjugate colonized populations in order to entrench an ideology necessary to promote colonial capitalism. Taking this as a point of departure, this article explores the long-term consequences of Filipinos being racialized as indolent, savage, and backwards through American notions of industriousness, civilization, and modernity. American categories of race are indelibly marred by its own experience committing genocide against Native Americans and history of enslaving African Americans. Thus, the contradiction between "liberating" the Filipino people and preparing the nation for a civilized and modern version of self, worthy of independence, and the historical biases and animosity toward people of color in American history, has left behind a racialized hierarchy in the Philippines that reinforces an elitist conception of what it means to be "Filipino," disenfranchising the poor, uneducated, and non-Christianized citizens in the country. This article will argue that this hierarchy established fractures that can be seen to this day, from Islamic separatist movements, to populist support of state-sanctioned genocide against the poor in Duterte's "war on drugs."

Keywords: race, decolonization, education, minorities, class

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At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, George Floyd's murder by a white police officer triggered massive Black Lives Matter protests throughout the United States and the world. One of the unexpected consequences of these protests was a reignited demand to rename David Prescott Barrows Hall at University of California (UC) Berkeley. In a proposal to rename the building submitted by the UC Berkeley African American Student Development Office, the justification to rename the building was that "Barrows argued that Black people are politically incapable, cannot successfully enact self-determination, are vicious, are lacking in free will, and cannot recognize their own rights" (Charles and Jackson 2020:2). Barrows served as president of the University of California from 1919 to 1923 and as professor of political science until 1943. Thus, when a new building for the social sciences was erected in 1964, the building was named in his honor. Nearly 60 years later, in response to the proposal to un-name the building, along with allegations that "throughout his lifetime, Barrows' words and actions were anti-Black, anti-Filipinx, anti-Indigenous, xenophobic, and Anglocentric," and that, "his actions form a striking pattern of racism and use of institutional power to repress desire for independence from the United States," in November 2020, Barrows' name was removed from the building (Charles and Jackson 2020:2; Public Affairs 2020).

Prior to Barrows' time at the University of California, he served as superintendent of schools for Manila in 1900 and general superintendent of education for the island until 1910. The proposal to un-name the building did not ignore this fact. It noted that, "Barrows infantilized and dehumanized Filipinx people and displayed a sense that he was carrying the 'white man's burden' as a colonizer. He advocated that nothing short of (white) Anglocentric culture and institutions are able to correct the 'subpar' mental faculties he portrayed among the Filipinx" (Charles and Jackson 2020:2). While the proposal provided a particularly harsh depiction of Barrows, the views expressed were not wrong. Barrows, as well as many of those who played a part in the American educational system in the Philippines, regardless of their intentions, created a massive impact on the Philippine nation, particularly as it pertained to race. As explored in this article, American conceptions of race heavily influenced their interactions with the Filipino people. Despite their attempts to break away from British imperialist methods and efforts to rule in a more "humanitarian" manner aimed at preparing Filipinos for their ultimate independence, American notions of educating, uplifting, and transforming the Filipino were ultimately tied to a notion of modernity that presumed Filipino values were ignorant, backwards, and needing of change. The domino effect of American intervention was that these notions of race became fetishized[1] and employed in a postcolonial nationalist project that encouraged homogeneity

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and animosity against those who were not Christian, middle class, and educated, such as Muslim Filipinos or the working class. Over time, this resentment over nonmodern, "backwards" Filipinos erupted into violence, through attempts to quell Muslim Filipino demands for recognition and the extrajudicial killing of working-class Filipinos—also known as the *masa*—through Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs."

Using Syed Hussein Alatas' "lazy native" framework, the first section of this article explains how race became an ideology in the American colonial period. As an ideology, American administrators were convinced of their purpose and interpreted all actions of Filipinos as justifying their agenda to uplift the nation—from depicting Filipinos as "savage" and "backwards," to claiming all advancements as a product of American intervention. Next, the article explores how despite "humanitarian" efforts to prepare the Philippines for independence, American notions of race were based on interactions with African Americans and Native Americans. It could not be ignored that as America was setting up its colony in Asia, it was also lynching African Americans, committing genocide against native Americans, and deciding how to educate and integrate both populations into the United States. Finally, the article explores how, in the postcolonial period, notions of race became muddled. The postcolonial identity of "Filipino" became the race. This fetishization of the "Filipino" race, and emphasis on its unity and homogeneity, targeted and attempted to erase any identity that went against the ideal, such as the uneducated, non-Christians, and the "lazy" or the "poor." The article then concludes with a discussion of two identities that threaten the Filipino identity—Muslim Filipinos and the *masa*—and how violence is enacted against them as a result.

THE MYTH OF THE LAZY NATIVE

Syed Hussein Alatas, in *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977:29) using a sociology of knowledge lens, argued that racial "myths" were created to justify colonial capitalism, adding that "the destruction of the pride of the native was considered as a necessity; hence the denigration of native character." As one of the earliest works to explore this condition, Alatas focused on Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines—dedicating two chapters to the Philippines. In chapter 3 ("The Image of the Filipino during the 17th to the 19th Centuries"), Alatas (1977:53) highlighted how the Spanish depicted Filipinos as "untrustworthy, dull, and lazy." Quoting Sinibaldo de Mas, Alatas added that in order to quell demands for independence, the Spanish found "it is necessary to keep [Filipinos] in such an intellectual and moral state that despite their numerical superiority they may weigh less politically than a bar of gold" (Alatas 1977:56). Practically, de Mas stated that this should be done by preventing the Filipino masses from learning how to read contracts and distracting them from events happening outside

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of their villages. Alatas went on to argue, however, that the real harm took place when the Spanish attempted to destroy demands for independence by preventing pride in anything Filipino and always treating Filipinos as inferior to the Spanish. Central to this denigration was the depiction of Filipinos as "indolent." Showcasing the work of José Rizal in *La Solidaridad,* Alatas (1977:98) in chapter 7 ("The Indolence of the Filipino") noted how Rizal recognized that indolence, or "little love for work, lack of activity," was a Spanish construct that hid the colonizer's attempt to dissuade Filipinos from learning Spanish, the vanquishing of populations due to crushing labor or exploitation of skills in sailing or rowing, and the active denial and suppression of evidence of Filipino intelligence. In short, the image of the "indolent" Filipino was a smokescreen to justify and hide Spanish exploitation of the islands.

This ideology of indolence was necessary to perpetuate control in the colony, and eventually across what is to become the Global South—or nations that "suffered the colonial experience and that [are] still suffering its enduring political, cultural, and social legacy" (Ciocchini 2019:21). In tandem with the works of Franz Fanon, Alatas explores the legacies of an inferiority complex for people who eventually began to believe that their "misfortunes [and] inferiority is the direct result of his cultural and racial characteristics" (Alatas 2019:31). Eventually, once development, modernity, and independence become framed within the cultural paradigm of the colonizer, even "equality" can be seen as being trapped within a racist discourse. According to Fanon, as cited by S. F. Alatas (2019:33), "the Negro is a slave that has been allowed to assume the attitude of a master. The white man is a master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table." Ultimately, this leads to the "captive mind," where, according to Malcolm X, the use of the term "Negro" itself, or perhaps in this case "Filipino," "is a product of Western civilization. Not only Western civilization, but Western crime" (Alatas 2016:199). For nations in the Global South, the legacy of colonization made it so that after achieving independence "talk of multiculturalism and pluralism was often discouraged as states attempted to consolidate themselves as unitary and homogenizing nation-states. . . [And this] pursuit of national homogenization has led to resistance amongst ethnic and religious minorities" (Kymlicka and He 2005:1). Thus, for colonized nations, even after they were able to achieve independence, the racial frameworks provided to them became the basis for violence in the postcolonial world.

After over three centuries of Spanish control over the Philippines, the nation was still deprived of its independence. Beginning in 1898, it was to endure nearly another five decades of control by the Americans. Although the Americans, through those such as David Prescott Barrows and Major John P. Finley, attempted to embark upon imperialism with "humanitarian"

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impulses, with President William McKinley declaring that the incorporation of the Philippine islands into the US was to be done through "benevolent assimilation," American control of the islands did not break the pattern of denigrating Filipinos.[2] Unlike the Spanish who were interested in maintaining control over the islands, the Americans, from the very beginning, had always declared their intention to hold onto the Philippines and prepare it for independence. Yet this intention in itself led to the continuation of the racial myth of "indolence." The claim that Filipinos were incapable of ruling themselves and required the guiding hand of the Americans entrenched an even deeper racialized sense of inadequacy, now disseminated widely through a newly constructed public educational system.

AMERICAN COLONIAL EDUCATION AND RACE

On December 21, 1898, after negotiating a transfer of power between the Spanish and the Americans and on the precipice of war with the Filipinos, President McKinley, in his now infamous Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation, declared: "[W]e come, not as invaders or conquerors, but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes. . . the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule" (McKinley 1898). "Benevolent assimilation" turned into one of the bloodiest military campaigns in US history. Renato Constantino (1975:245) estimated that up to 600,000 Filipinos were killed in the Philippine-American War, a number just shy of the total number of casualties during the American Civil War (Drew 2006; see Hacker 2011).[3] Once Filipinos were subdued, the Americans rolled out one of the largest public works programs in Philippine history, with education as central to this campaign. Starting with soldiers who had been left behind as teachers in each town captured by the Americans, to the importation of hundreds of young college graduates known as "Thomasites" (named after the US vessel that brought them to the Philippines), these teachers helped provide Filipinos with the tools to be self-sufficient but, at the same time, inculcated generations of Filipino children with American notions of development, modernity, and civilization. Central to this project was David Prescott Barrows. Thus, the next section explores his policies as a colonial administrator of schools in the Philippines from 1900 to 1910. While his policies were being enacted in Manila and the Christianized parts of the country, Mindanao was also experiencing its own American educational campaign through "Moro Exchanges"—trading posts established to educate the non-Christianized, and mainly Muslim, population of Mindanao to become transformed into nonviolent, "civilized" citizens able to properly engage in agricultural and commercial activities. Finally, this section delves into how the teachers themselves observed their roles, how they treated their students, and how race was a factor in both.

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David Prescott Barrows and Public Education

After completing a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Chicago on the Cahuilla in 1897, David Prescott Barrows taught at the California State Normal School in San Diego. Keen on getting to Asia, Barrows approached his friend, Benjamin Ida Wheeler, president of the University of California at the time, who was able to help Barrows accompany William Howard Taft's Philippine Commission to Manila in 1900 (Clymer 1976:499). Initially, Barrows served as superintendent of Manila schools until 1901, when he was appointed Chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes of the Philippine Islands, an agency under the US Department of Interior that was aimed at promoting "civilization and material prosperity" among non-Christian tribes (Gowing 1980:145). In 1903, he was promoted to the position of general superintendent of education for the islands. Overseeing a massive overhaul of the education system in the Philippines was a controversial project, and Judith Raftery (1998), in her article, "Textbook Wars," explains how Barrows, in his efforts to create a secular public school system, was accused by the Archbishop of Manila, John Ireland, of demonizing the Spanish and sidelining Catholic beliefs as a result. Clymer (1976: 502), in exploring this anti-Spanish sentiment, quotes Barrows, who stated that "extreme provincialism, petty despotism, and a less than ideal admixture of Spanish culture precluded [Filipinos from handling their own affairs]." Clymer (1976:502) goes on to add that on these bases Barrows declared, "I do not think the Filipino is yet born who will control, to say nothing of governing justly, the Philippine Islands."

Barrows believed that it was the duty of the Americans to transform the Filipino, not for the benefit of American control and enterprise, but for Filipinos themselves. In the textbook he prepared for Philippine students, he states, "If there is to be transformation here, with a constant growth of knowledge and advancement, and an elevation of the character of the people as a whole, there must be a courageous and unfaltering search for the truth" (Barrows 1907:12). Toward the end of the book, in a section on independence, he adds that "the American nation will not intrust the Philippines with independence until they have immeasurably gained in political experience and social self-control" (Barrows 1907:318). While benign, the subtext provided is that until the Filipino can demonstrate a true transformation from its backwards ways, independence will not be granted. Clymer (1976:502) argues that Barrows saw Filipinos as "civilized," but at the same time, he saw non-Christian tribes as "warlike, savage, and [who] resist approach" (Barrows 1907:34) and certain indigenous tribes, such as the Aeta, also known as "Negritos" by the Spanish, as "wild, timid . . . few have ever been truly civilized in spite of the efforts of some of the Spanish missionaries" (Barrows 1907:29). In contrast, "the white, or

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European, race is, above all others, the great historical race," with the history of all other races only taking place once they are recognized by the white man (Barrows 1907:13). Thus, somewhere between the savage and the white man, Filipinos were not able to rule themselves until they became fully transformed. How and when such a transformation took place is not indicated in Barrows' book, although it is clear that Filipinos should never return to their indigenous state and could never become part of a "great historical race."

Muslim Filipinos and the Moro Exchanges

While Barrows was made in charge of Manila schools and then eventually the Christianized parts of the country, the southern island of Mindanao had not yet been fully subdued by the US military. Thus, education in this part of the country took on a different form. Furthermore, the racialized assumption of people in the south was that they were more violent and less civilized. Dominated by Muslim ethnic groups, such as the Tausug, Maranao, and Maguindanao, as well as indigenous non-Muslim population, such as the B'laan, Tiduray, Tboli, and the Samal Badjau, Mindanao was never colonized by the Spanish. According to the first Annual Report of the Moro Province, "the element which has been most difficult to deal with has been the Moro [Muslim Filipino] . . . all of them . . . as a rule . . . despis[e] Christians and liv[e] very largely by piracy, slave trading, and robbery of the weaker and less warlike savage races of the province" (Finley 1904:4). Stating that it had been difficult to control the region and to enact a set of laws that all populations on the island could follow, the report adds, "The Moros are, in a way, religious and moral degenerates . . . they have no written laws worthy of the name" (Finley 1904:8). Ultimately, such negative views of Muslim Filipinos became described as the "Moro Problem," a phrase "conjured by American colonial elites to encompass the challenges posed by the sociocultural 'backwardness' of Muslims in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago" (Charbonneau 2021:27). Despite these negative descriptions of the Muslim Filipino, according to Finley (1904:8), "with all their faults the Moros are brave and resolute, and under good laws and an honest government will in time give a good account of themselves."

Part of the duties of this "honest government" was to implement projects that would transform Muslim Filipinos into "law abiding citizens." First, it facilitated the further growth of "civilized" Christian populations in Mindanao by enacting the Homestead Act in 1913, providing incentives to economic migrants from the Christianized northern island for settling in the sparsely populated islands of Mindanao. Second, the "Moro Exchange system" was created, allowing Muslim Filipinos, non-Muslim indigenous tribes, and Christians to trade their wares. According to Major John Finley,

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District Governor of Zamboanga (one of the five districts in Moro Province and the seat of the capital of the province) from 1903 to 1912, "It has been clearly evident to the American army during its occupation of the southern Philippines that the regeneration of the uncivilized tribes of that region must be accomplished along industrial lines" (Finley 1913a:365). Finley further says, the "Moro Exchange system has become the active agent of awakening the commercial spirit of the uncivilized tribes the southern islands of the Philippines, [and] has become powerful instrument for peace and unity among Moros and Pagans" (Finley 1913b:332). The purpose and function of the "Moro Exchange" received recognition in the Philippines and in the United States. Published in *The Outlook*, a New York-based weekly periodical, "Turning Savages into Citizens" by Atherton Brownell states, "The Moros have not been tamed [but] . . . the idea of the New York produce exchange as a method of educating these people and of leading them from their ways of savagery into the walks of peace—[is] possibly the most unique of all experiments in the history of civilization of native tribes" (Brownell 1911:922). According to Hawkins (2013:93), "despite capitalism's proficient 'invisible hand,' colonial officials still found many opportunities to tutor Moros in the ways, attitudes, and styles of economic modernity." Thus, as opposed to addressing the underlying conflicts between Muslims and Christians, or the larger issue of depriving Muslims Filipinos of their freedom, the US government saw instilling capitalism and notions of "citizenship" and "economic modernity" as more important.

American Teachers in the Philippines

Once the Americans determined that the educational system left behind by the Spanish was too difficult to maintain due to the lack of Spanish speakers, and that its content was outdated and overly religious, it was decided that a major overhaul of the system was necessary. Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, in *Bearers of Benevolence*, comments, "the Thomasites"—the young recent college graduates that were recruited from throughout the United States to serve as teachers in the newly colonized Philippine Islands—"saw themselves as bringing more than just basic literacy and numeracy skills. They were charged with inculcating democratic values and ideals into young Filipino minds . . ." (Hollnsteiner and Ick 2001:4). But not all saw their presence as helpful. According to Renato Constantino (1966:71), the American educational system in the Philippines left behind several lasting influences, including the use of English as the major language and an imbedded reverence for American culture. Even at that time, colonial administrators saw the problems with bringing in white teachers to "civilize the natives." According to James LeRoy (1902:100), who worked with the Philippine Commission, "Everyone recognizes the all-exclusiveness with the use of the term 'white man' . . . Whether fetich or philosophy, it predicates to

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us the highest common multiple of intelligence and virtue. We make it our synonym for 'civilization.'" Training Filipinos in a language foreign to their own, embedding a reverence for a foreign culture, and "civilizing natives" in the ways of the "white man" all left a lasting impression on young Filipinos, informing them that to be modern was to be something other than what they were or what they spoke.

But it was the teachers themselves that also left a deep impression on Filipino students. Even some of the stone-cold soldiers, hardened by the treachery of war, softened to their newfound roles as teachers to eager and curious children. According to an enlisted man commenting on his teaching assignment, "I enjoyed it more than anything else; in fact, those are the best six months of my life" (Gates 1973:87). Some of these soldiers voluntarily taught 15-hour days, and some petitioned to stay on for a decade past their discharge date (Villareal et al. 2003:90). Other teachers, however, were not as pleased with their job. In Kimberly Alidio's article, "When I Get Home, I Want to Forget," she unearthed letters from couple Harrie and Mary Cole, with the former writing home and stating, "I shall probably hate the sight of anything but a white man the rest of my life" (Alidio 1999:118). In *Mimetic Subjects: Engendering Race at the End of Empire*, Vicente Rafael (1995) shows how Mary Fee, a teacher in the Philippines for eight years, saw Filipinos as inferior to Americans due to their "infantile" and "feminine" characteristics. She was quoted as saying, "Filipino men are thus not real men because they do not share in the qualities of white masculinity . . . [but] they are neither feminine nor masculine because they are not white. [T]he only subject position left is . . . that of a child" (Rafael 1995:9). It was not surprising therefore that the soldiers that began teaching before the Thomasites also had their doubts about the Filipino capacity to learn. When Marius John was informed that his fellow soldiers had enlisted as teachers, his response was," "What? Teach the gugus[4] . . . You can't pound anything into their heads with a sledgehammer" (Suzuki 1991:74). Unintelligent, infantile, and emasculated was what many teachers thought of Filipinos. And even if these individuals constituted a minority of the teachers in the Philippines, it should not be forgotten that at that time, African Americans and Native Americans were not allowed equal access to education in the United States. Only the fortunate few were sent to industrial training schools like Tuskegee or Carlisle, since they were never considered intelligent enough to enter white schools; or, worse, they were sent in a deliberate attempt to eradicate all remanences of their culture (see DuBois 1903; Hunziker 2020).

Thus, as Muslim Filipinos were being taught how to become "civilize[d] inhabitants . . . [to] develop the country, abolish piracy, slavery, and polygamy" and schools were being "establish[ed] for education of the Moro youths, to turn his bloody spears and krises and campilans into utensils of industry" (Annual Report 1902:497), Christian Filipinos were being

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taught to internalize a racialized social hierarchy where to be modern was to accept the white American values. These lessons left lasting impressions on what it meant to become "modern" and "Filipino."

POSTCOLONIAL "FILIPINOS"

Thus, although the Americans were democratizing access to education, they were doing so in a way that posited white, American values, as admirable, to be emulated, and ideal—while Filipino language, culture, and values were denigrated and seen as infantile. Upon independence, however, Filipinos had the opportunity to reclaim their land, heritage, and identity in a bold and proud way. In rejection of the past, Renato Constantino, in his famous essay "The Miseducation of the Filipino," states, "Under previous colonial regimes, education saw to it that the Filipino mind was subservient to the master . . . we must now think for ourselves . . . unless we prepare the minds of the young for this endeavor . . . we shall always be a pathetic people with no definite goals and no assurance of preservation" (Constantino 1966:19). Reynaldo Ileto (1998:180) refers to Teodoro Agoncillo and Oscar Alfonso's discussion of the "unfinished revolution," in which "because of so much of the Filipino mentality was colonial—still tainted with Spanish and American accretions—the revolution was, in fact, still 'unfinished.'" Beginning in the late 1950s, this led to the rise of a nationalist movement aimed at reclaiming the nation's history, a change in language policies (Tinio 2009; Gaerlan 1998), and the emergence of Filipino-centric disciplines such as *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Enriquez 1994; Torres 1980).

But as discussed in this section, in postcolonial nations, the state seized this racialist discourse to create a nationalist agenda for the purpose of enhancing authoritarianism or to manage economic growth (Goh 2008). In countries like the Philippines, national homogenization had led to resistance among ethnic and religious minorities, thus providing the basis for violence, secessionist movements, and civil war (Kymlicka and He 2005). As would be seen in the case of Filipino Muslims, the Philippines used the same tools to suppress minority nationalism as the Americans did: settlement policies were designed to outnumber national minorities in their historic homeland with settlers from the dominant group (Kymlicka 2005:38). Marcos also used Muslim Filipino demands for autonomy to declare martial law and to launch a series of military exercises to quell Muslim separatist demands (McKenna 1998:157). Furthermore, an emphasis on industrial and economic development tended to complicate efforts at reconciliation, as residents of Mindanao continued to see financial stability as more important than solving interracial conflict. In the case of the poor, the "war on drugs" during the Duterte administration had created a situation in which "drug users and dealers [we]re constructed as 'immoral others' to be eliminated for the sake of development" (Kusaka 2017a:65). As will be

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discussed in the final section, the elite and middle classes in the Philippines had waged a moral war against the poor through Duterte's "war on drugs." By purging the nation of the unwanted "immoral others," the elite and middle class could purge the nation of its backward and uncivilized people, thus purifying the Filipino identity.

Muslim Filipinos and the Legacy of American Intervention

Muslim Filipino sentiments of discontent with the Philippine government emerged in the 1960s and eventually erupted into demands for independence. Borne out of governmental neglect and long-standing tensions between Muslims and Christians that had been exacerbated and ignored by the Americans, in 1968, a few weeks after the Jabidah Massacre,[5] the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) organized to challenge the Philippine government. In 1969, the MNLF started guerrilla training exercises, and throughout the early 1970s, armed clashes between government troops and Muslim insurgents took place. Ferdinand Marcos Sr. used these armed clashes to declare martial law in 1972. Four years later, the Philippine government and the MNLF signed the Tripoli Agreement in attempts to quell ongoing military operations, but factions of the MNLF rejected the idea of autonomy, giving rise to a "New MNLF" that eventually took on the name Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Furthermore, although the Tripoli Agreement had been signed, it was generally believed that the document was never fully implemented, prompting both the MNLF and the MILF to continue their operations against the government. With the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, Corazon Aquino's government attempted to implement the Tripoli Agreement by establishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Although a step forward, the new entity failed to include the MILF and was accused of being underfunded, with claims of mismanagement weakening the position of Nur Misuari, chairperson of the ARMM. This aggravated the tensions between the new entity and the Philippine government.

Many noted the intensity of the conflict between the Philippine government and separatist groups to be at its highest in the 1970s and during the military campaigns in 2000 and 2003 (Berlinger et al. 2009). From the American colonial period onwards, as the Christian migrants to Mindanao began to outnumber Muslims and other indigenous peoples, Muslim Filipinos increasingly felt that they were not being treated equally. At the same time, violence began to erupt between the "Ilagas," a group of Christian armed men, and the Black Shirts, a group of Muslim armed men. While their origins were unknown, these vigilantes would enter communities and expunge Christians or Muslims by force. The Ilagas, for instance, would kill or harass Muslim people, while the Black Shirts would harass or kill Christians. By 1975, this violence had led to the largest

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outmigration of individuals in the country and roughly an equal number of internally displaced people (Costello 1984:5; McKenna 1998:150).

After years of trying to make the ARMM work, and with the rising influence of the MILF, by the early 2000s, ongoing skirmishes between the Islamic separatists and the government had exploded into an "all-out war" under the Joseph Estrada administration. Combined with the emergence of splinter groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf, which were engaging in kidnap for ransom activities, this round of military engagements resulted in violent battles and a massive volume of internally displaced people. After Estrada was impeached, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo garnered US support when she declared the Philippines open to US military exercises in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States (Radics 2004). As a result, the Philippines became the site of the second largest number of US troops deployed outside of Afghanistan and the largest number of US troops on Philippine soil since the Philippine–American war (Radics 2004). Despite efforts of President Benigno Aquino III to reform the ARMM and create a new political entity called the Bangsamoro, at the end of January 2015, an attempt to serve arrest warrants on high-ranking terrorists in the municipality of Mamasapano in the Maguindanao Province of Mindanao led to a botched military operation that killed 44 members of the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police (PNP), 18 members of the MILF, five members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (a breakaway group of the MILF), and several civilians (Mendez 2015). The clash in Mamasapano was called a "massacre" by the Philippine Senate, bringing about a temporary suspension on hearings of the bill to introduce the autonomous Bangsamoro region in the Senate and in the Philippine House of Representatives (Cruz 2015).

After signing the Bangsamoro Organic Law in 2018, which established the new political entity to replace the ARMM, Duterte announced his intention to push for a federalist form of government, thereby changing the constitution, as Marcos Sr. did in 1973. Those who rejected the proposal feared that this could lead to a dictatorship once again, arguing that ongoing land dispossession would persist and that human rights violations now conducted by the state government, as opposed to the national government, would lead to even less scrutiny (Lamchek and Radics 2021). Conversely, those who supported charter change believed that this could complete the "unfinished revolution" during the American colonization and could lead to economic growth, since resources could be regulated and controlled by local governments (Lamchek and Radics 2021).

Extrajudicial Killings in the War on Drugs

In June 2016, Rodrigo Duterte became president based on a campaign promise of implementing the tough-on-crime policies he had applied as

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mayor of Davao City (Ciocchini 2019). Upon being elected, he unleashed a massive and brutal "war on drugs," with antidrug operations resulting in 4,729 deaths, according to the PNP, whereas human rights organizations estimated the number of deaths to be almost 20,000 (Gavilan 2018). This final section highlights how Duterte's "war on drugs" reinforced the entrenched class warfare between the *masa*[6] and elite and middle-class sensibilities (Ciocchini 2019; Radics and Ciocchini, forthcoming).

Wataru Kusaka (2017b) notes that during the Spanish colonial era, religious orders and *mestizos* seized land from indigenous populations, thus creating deeply entrenched inequality in the Philippines that could be traced to this feudal-based system. Although the American colonial regime introduced changes, the Americans further embedded this inequality by promoting the educated and the rich within the colonial government, thereby establishing a political aristocracy (Radics 2001; Anderson 1988). On the other end of the spectrum emerged a highly impoverished sector of the population that was heavily dependent on patronage networks dominated by local elites, who had wealth and access to power.[7] The poorest sectors of the population, the *masa*, became strongly stigmatized by the elite classes (Kusaka 2017b). The pejorative term *masa* has strong negative connotations that go beyond the lack of economic resources to imply a fundamentally flawed cultural identity (Ciocchini 2019; Garrido 2019). Rapid industrialization after World War II brought about massive rural-urban migration, expanding slum populations in major cities such as Manila (Kusaka 2017b, 2010). Urban middle-class enclaves began to coexist alongside these urban slums, reinforcing sharp boundaries and intensifying the distinction and discrimination of the *masa* (Garrido 2019). Thus, in between the two sectors of the elites and the *masa*, a growing middle class morally confronts both the traditional local elites and the poorest sectors of society (Kusaka 2017a). These class tensions have become deep-seated and served as fault lines on which the open confrontation between the *masa* and the middle class regarding Duterte's "war on drugs" erupted.

Pablo Ciocchini (2019) argues that, while politics in the Philippines has been openly violent since the colonial times, it was Marcos' authoritarian regime that enabled police violence in postcolonial Philippines. Under Marcos, an estimated 3,257 were killed, 35,000 tortured, and some 70,000 arrested (McCoy 2009). Ciocchini (2019) asserts that two important factors should be taken into consideration when making sense of this situation. First, although the Marcos regime ended in 1986, political violence continued during the democratic years. Those who oppose the power of the state, such as communists and the Muslim minority, have been the target of extrajudicial killings since the fall of the Marcos regime (Kreuzer 2018). Second, extrajudicial killing has been used as a means to enrich the police. Sheila Coronel (2017) argues that while there may be different

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reasons for the police to engage in violent and abusive practices, such as an institutional culture of violence or the ease of building cases through torture and forced confessions, the main reason behind their brutal behavior is to generate income through bribery and kidnapping. Pablo Ciocchini and Jayson Lamchek (2023) brilliantly highlight how legal professionals, such as prosecutors and judges, continue the weaponization of morality against the poor rather than use the law to counter the same. Thus, according to Kreuzer (2018), Duterte merely nationalized a police vigilantism that had already been used for "social cleansing" and that had long been taking place in different regions of the country. Duterte's violent campaign is only possible because of an entrenched culture of violence and illegality within the Filipino police that could be traced to the Marcos regime.

CONCLUSION

Syed Hussein Alatas' discussion of the "lazy native" ideology has provided us with an effective lens to examine the consequences of American education in the Philippines, particularly as it pertains to race. Starting with a brief discussion of Alatas' exploration of Filipino "indolence" in the Spanish colonial era, this article proceeded to discuss how the educational policies of David Prescott Barrows, the military government in Mindanao, and the teachers themselves implanted a racist ideology that persisted well into the postcolonial era. Embedding a teleological narrative of transformation—one in which the Filipino shall never retreat to the past—to an emphasis on economic and industrial development overall, and, finally, the reiteration of the primacy of the white race, it was inevitable that upon independence, a violent rejection of these aspersions upon the nation and its people would take place. The reaction, however, led to its own disastrous consequences, with the fetishization of a "Filipino" race that demands unity and homogenization, and a corresponding antagonistic and hostile attitude toward those at the margins, namely, Muslim Filipinos and the *masa*.

While Alatas (1977) gives a clear picture of the problem, he offers a potential solution as well. Going beyond the "captive mind," this article serves as evidence that we need to develop an autonomous social science that interrogates the categories left behind by the colonizer, and examine the consequences of such categories in the postcolonial world (Alatas 1972). As was demonstrated in this article, upholding the primacy of a proud "Filipino" race means to also reiterate white notions of "civilization," "masculinity," and "morality." By interrogating how racialized categories that stem from colonial pasts exclude, discriminate, and purge outsiders, we expose how the open violence that Ciocchini (2019) talks about has continued from the past to the present. In addition to understanding how this process has emerged in the Philippines, the "myth of the lazy native" can serve as a starting point for those interested in studying similar situations

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and conditions in other postcolonial nations throughout the Global South also grappling with violence.

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NOTES

1 Karl Marx uses the concept of fetishism to discuss how we imbue power into inanimate things, such as commodities. He states, "to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relations both with one another and the human race" (Tucker 1978:321). The term fetishism is used here to highlight that once constructed, the concept of race takes on extreme, almost religious, significance, particularly in the postcolonial nation-building process.

2 Excellent literature on work and labor during the American colonial period covers this period. These works include: Bankoff (2005); Aguilar (1998); Rosenberg (1903); and Pante (2014). The author would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewer for highlighting these references.

3 Hacker (2011:309) states that for nearly 110 years, the number of deaths during the US Civil War was estimated at 620,000. Through the use of census data, however, he estimates that the number was closer to 750,000.

4 A derogatory term used to describe Filipinos, seen as the precursor to the term "gook" used during the Vietnam War (Jung 2014).

5 In 1968, when Ferdinand Marcos Sr. attempted to train a group of Muslim insurgents to undermine Malaysia's claim to Sabah, those who refused to obey his commander's orders were slaughtered in what became known as the Jabidah Massacre (Che Man 1990). Since most of those trained were Muslims, Muslim communities saw this as the government's complete disregard for their rights. Coupled with the increased government-subsidized migration of Christians from the north to Mindanao, tensions ran high as Muslim leaders began to organize politically and began to demand for political power and, eventually, separation (Bauzon 1990).

6 See Soon (2008, 2012, 2021) for detailed explorations into the concept of the *masa* in Philippine politics.

7 For a discussion on this arrangement, see Lande (1965), Hutchcroft (1998), and Sidel (1999). Some question the parameters of the "patron–client" framework and the utility of relying too heavily on it (see Ileto 2001; Radics 2001).

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