

Go, Julian; Foster, Anne (Hg.): *The American Colonial State in the Philippines. Global Perspectives*. Durham: Duke University Press 2003. ISBN: 0-8223-3101-2; 316 S.

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The powerful and enduring legacy of the claim to an exceptional national development of the United States is increasingly being challenged by advocates of the internationalization of American history. Their work utilizes comparative and transnational perspectives to broaden the analytical focus and thus contextualize the nation's historical developments.¹ The American Colonial State in the Philippines is a path-breaking contribution to this new research trend and critically engages America's past as a colonial power. The volume's seven essays interrogate the analytical value of exceptionalism, situate American colonialism in a global context, and demonstrate the benefits of an international perspective with methodological sophistication.

Paul A. Kramer illustrates how the rhetoric of exceptionalism was historically constructed. He demonstrates how initial American colonial state-building in the Philippines was driven by and legitimized through the racial rapprochement between the United States and Great Britain. This Anglo-Saxonism provided a strong rationale for inter-imperial dialogue and enabled American advocates of expansion to situate their own empire within a larger, highly dynamic, transatlantic racial discourse. With the acquisition of colonial expertise, however, and faced with increasing British criticisms of their approach to empire in the Philippines, Americans resorted to national exceptionalism. While their approach to colonial governance was clearly shaped through the appropriation of European, in particular British colonial insights, Americans now emphasized the distinct features of U.S. colonial state-building.

The importance of inter-imperial dialogues to policy formation in the American Philippines is detailed in Anne L. Foster's analysis of U.S. policies with regard to opium pro-

duction. This case study demonstrates how Washington shifted its policy from early intentions to utilize opium trade revenues for colonial purposes to complete prohibition in response not only to strong missionary criticisms but to a general trend towards reform prevalent in all trans-imperial discourses and exchanges with neighboring colonial possessions. But while the „Opium Committee“ studied the Japanese in Formosa, the British in India, and the Straits Settlements, the French in Indochina, and the Dutch in Java, and while all colonial powers recognized the need for reform she concludes that, „the United States was the only power to give up the lucrative opium revenue voluntarily.“ (p. 112-113).

This tendency towards appropriation and rejection was also prevalent in American approaches to governance in the southern Philippines. Donna J. Amoroso examines how inter-imperial dialogues informed the American discussion about state-building in this predominantly Muslim part of the archipelago. But while the British counterparts in Malaya quickly abandoned the idea of civilizational 'uplift' of their colony: „Americans saw the Moros from the start as a minority to be integrated into the national life of the Philippines.“ (p. 142) U.S. colonial administrators consequently rejected the validity of British concepts of indirect rule and embarked on a quest for complete control over and transformation of the southern Philippines.

Patricio N. Abinales also explores American approaches to U.S. rule in Mindanao, but emphasizes intra-imperial rather than inter-imperial connections. He analyzes the duality of colonial state-building in the Philippines and suggests that the United States actually constructed two entities: one for the 'civilized' Christian population and a second for the Muslim population of the South. His essay develops a double comparison between these two entities and between the Philippines and conflicting domestic reform politics in the imperial center. He illustrates how colonial state-building paralleled the fragmented state of domestic reform and concludes: „Although a more cohesive state eventually evolved in the United States, the colonial state in the Philippines [...] maintained its patchwork character.“ (p. 173)

¹ Bender, Thomas (ed.), *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, Berkeley 2002.

While Abinales' essay underlines the 'patchwork' nature of a colonial entity, Julian Go's essay emphasizes tensions within the U.S. Empire. He provides an intra-imperial comparison of state formation in the Philippines and in Puerto Rico and demonstrates how the American project of political education in both colonies evolved from initial similarities to radical differences. The incorporation of political elites in both possessions into a colonial regime differed widely as „political education in Puerto Rico took on a more restrictive and tightened form than initial plans dictated.“ (p. 185) Go attributes those differences to translocal tensions beyond the immediate colonial context: „the unpredicted and unforeseen character of political education in Puerto Rico and the Philippines was shaped by tensions that spanned the United States' entire chain of empire.“ (p. 185) Those tensions were largely the result of the uneven impact of political forces in the metropole as the U.S. Congress enacted different economic approaches to the two colonies and thus defined diverging parameters for the accompanying strategies of colonial state-building.

The importance of economic factors is also highlighted in Paul Barclay's inter-imperial comparison of U.S. policies towards the highland Igorots in the Philippines and Japanese colonial policies towards Taiwan's hill tribes. Both ethnic groups were an integral part of the metropole's imperial propaganda as frequent subjects of ethnographic shows and provided an important rhetorical component for the discursive construction of the „mountaineer-lowlander-colonizer triad“ (p. 220). But while the United States implemented a policy of comparative neglect in the highlands of Luzon, Japan's extension of colonial administration into Taiwan's interior was accompanied by persecution, dislocation, and marginalization of the highland peoples. Barclay emphasizes the impact of the militarization and environmental destruction on the indigenous population and attests these differences in approach largely to economic interests: „The reason for this divergence was not a lack of sympathy [...] on the part of Japanese colonizers. Rather, these sentiments were overwhelmed by economic considerations

and the fierce armed resistance of Taiwan's upland peoples.“ (p. 225)

Finally, Vince Boudreau concludes the volume with an inter-imperial comparison of methods of domination and modes of resistance in the American Philippines in a comparative perspective. In contrast to Dutch, British, and French rule in Indonesia, Burma, and Vietnam, Boudreau suggests evidence for a distinct American 'success' in colonial cooptation and argues that the promise of eventual independence „sufficed to draw emerging national elites away from mass-mobilizing contention.“ (p. 256) The incorporation of Filipinos into the colonial regime deflected popular criticisms in the archipelago and the American emphasis on universal education, broad suffrage, and upward mobility ironically made the colonial government appear comparatively more progressive and liberal than the indigenous conservative land-holding elite: „U.S. domination of the Philippines was somewhat at odds with local class domination and local elites drew more fire and ire than Americans from upward-striving nationalists“ (p. 259).

All of essays provide evidence for differences between American colonial state-building in the Philippines and European and Japanese approaches to colonial governance in Southeast Asia. And yet, as Daniel Rodgers has emphasized, „Exceptionalism differs from difference“.² The volume's contributions identify multiple dimensions of a powerful web of inter-imperial, trans-imperial, and intra-imperial exchanges, transfers, and appropriations. The United States was an integral part of this dialogue and contemporaries charged with colonial state-building in the Philippines clearly perceived themselves members of an international 'epistemic community' of colonial 'learners'. The book convincingly illuminates those connections, makes a substantial contribution to the international contextualization of U.S. history, and is ideally suited to stimulate further research into the transnational configurations of the American Way of Empire.

Endnotes:

² See also: Rodgers, Daniel T., „Exceptionalism“, in: Molho, Anthony, Wood, Gordon S. (eds.), *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, Princeton 1998, p. 21-40.

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