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The Impact of Empire on the North American Woman Suffrage Movement: Suffrage Racism in an Imperial Context

ALLISON L. SNEIDER

BRITISH HISTORIAN Antoinette Burton suggests that “acknowledging the impact of empire on the British women’s movement is one of the most urgent projects of late twentieth-century Western feminism.”¹ The same is true for historians of the North American woman suffrage movement. Empire, or rather the possibility of empire in the last years of the nineteenth century, played an important role in the American woman suffrage movement’s shift away from the radical reform tradition of its abolitionist beginnings, to the racism which characterizes the later movement. Susan B. Anthony, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association [NAWSA] from 1892 to 1900, was central to this transition.

Early histories of the suffrage movement generally attribute suffrage racism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the increased participation of white southern women in the national suffrage movement during the 1890s.² These explanations also rely on generational arguments which further link the rise of suffrage racism to the influx of younger native born white middle-class women into the movement during this same period. Like their white southern counterparts, these younger women had no personal connection with the movement’s antebellum abolitionist roots. The rise of suffrage racism meant the abandonment of radical/equal rights arguments for the vote in favor of insidious expediency arguments; inherently racist claims for woman suffrage premised on white women’s innate ability to “purify” politics by countering the effects of immigrant and freedmen’s ballots.³ The earliest form of expediency argument was the demand for educational qualifications for the vote. Relying on generational models to explain the emergence of expediency arguments in the 1890s, historians deny the responsibility of the old suffrage leadership, spe-

cifically the importance of Anthony, for suffrage racism.

More recently, scholars searching for the historic roots of many contemporary black women's antipathy to the modern women's movement hold Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founder of the woman's rights movement at Seneca Falls in 1848 and first president of the NAWSA, particularly responsible. Citing Stanton's historic abandonment of both abolitionists and the Republican party during the late 1860s, and her advocacy of educational qualifications for the vote in 1894 and again in 1897, Stanton has become a model of nineteenth-century white woman's rights advocates willingness to preserve race hierarchy in the quest for sex equality.⁴ Although Anthony also abandoned abolitionists and the Republican party, she is not held equally accountable. For example, Paula Giddings argues that Anthony, unlike Stanton, was not a racist.

Anthony viewed the strategy of expediency—despite its racist and classist implications—as ends justifying means. However, Anthony personally maintained and often expressed a liberal point of view. She was not, for example, a proponent of educated suffrage. She often invited Blacks to her home and saw to it that they were treated respectfully.⁵

Ellen Carol DuBois, arguing that Stanton *and* Anthony's heroic status for modern feminists must be re-evaluated, calls historians' attention to the opposition between black woman suffrage and white woman suffrage, engendered, again, by Stanton and Anthony's break with the Republican party in the late 1860s. DuBois distinguishes, however, between "counterposing" the "claims of race and sex" in the pursuit of the suffrage, for which Stanton and Anthony share responsibility, and actively "antagonizing" these claims, for which Stanton alone is held accountable.⁶

Historians' inability to view Anthony through the same critical lens with which Stanton is scrutinized is due in part to Anthony's consistent anti-racist statements with respect to American blacks. Her condemnation of the white South's mistreatment of freedmen, her abhorrence of lynching and her personal relationships with individual black men and women is well documented.⁷ Anthony was not as consistent, however, in her treatment of Hawaiians and Filipinos, a fact easily obscured by the organization of historical scholarship within the parameters of national boundaries. In this essay I argue that it was in the trans-national arena that Anthony formulated racist arguments for white women's enfranchisement inconsistent with the equal rights tradition from which nineteenth-century suffragism had originally come. And it is primarily in this con-

text that Anthony's racism appears less the product of political opportunism than of both the racial values and cultural assumptions of her age.

Recent work on both European and American missionaries, temperance crusaders, and colonial women suggests that empire provided Anglo-Saxon women with the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for political equality as they became "civilizing agents" for their home country.⁸ Empire shaped the development of American suffragism as well. In early 1899, Stanton and Anthony gave tacit approval to the colonial project upon which the U.S. was embarking at the close of the Spanish-American War. As co-authors of the "Hawaiian Appeal," a petition which urged the enfranchisement of Hawaiian women on the same terms as Hawaiian men, Stanton and Anthony effectively linked the woman suffrage cause to U.S. imperial expansion in both Hawaii and the Philippines.⁹ In the process, Anthony used the racial and racist language most often associated with advocates of black disenfranchisement. Anthony's authorship locates her as an active participant in the privileging of Anglo-Saxon heritage, pervasive throughout this period.

The Spanish-American War: Suffrage Leaders Divided

Although the "Hawaiian Appeal" was a collaborative effort, Stanton and Anthony came to it along very different paths. In the summer of 1898 a reporter for the *New York Tribune* asked several prominent American women their opinion on the war with Spain. In response to the question "do women still favor the war?," Stanton replied "war under many circumstances [is] a great blessing...Justice, liberty, equality for all first, and then that peace 'that passeth all understanding.'"¹⁰ Adhering firmly to a pacifist stance, Anthony answered, "There is, there can be, no justifiable cause for war."¹¹ While Stanton was not alone among members of the woman suffrage movement in her support of United States military intervention in Cuba, her disagreement with Anthony reflected a cleavage between leaders who had worked together for decades.

The six months following McKinley's declaration of war with Spain in April 1898 saw a lively debate in the pages of the *Woman's Journal*¹² over the role of American women in foreign affairs. Ellen M. Henrotin, President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, put forth a view typical of the pro-war sentiment advanced by the *Journal's* subscribers. Henrotin wrote that while, "the members of the General Federation would condemn a war which was undertaken for aggrandizement or territorial acquisition...its members recognize the fact that this nation, in the vanguard of all Republics, must stand alone for the cause of humanity."¹³ Believing the war with Spain was just and reflecting the disinterested benevolence of a right minded people, Henrotin pledged McKinley

the moral support of her organization.

Surprisingly, Henrotin's sentiments provided a stark contradiction to those of male suffragists. Editor Henry Blackwell declared, "if women were voters there would have been no war."¹⁴ William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., son of the famous abolitionist and supporter of the suffrage cause, quickly seconded Blackwell's idealized vision of American womanhood, chastising them for their bellicosity in the *Journal's* next issue. "It is a common claim made for women that, when they shall obtain their political rights, their influence at the ballot-box will make for a higher civilization...Where stand women at this hour?"¹⁵

The women who responded to Garrison's query chipped away at the pervasive notion of women as a "peace loving sex." While some argued that war with Spain was unnecessary and even unjust, almost all resented Garrison's identification of pacifism with woman. After criticizing Garrison's "inference that women as a class should be more opposed to war than men," Florence Burleigh went on to condemn suffragists who used arguments of women's higher morality to gain the vote. "Woman suffragists make a great mistake in advocating the granting of the franchise to women on any other ground than justice...Women as a class may be more moral than men," she argued, "but are they any wiser?"¹⁶ Other respondents used both arguments at once, suggesting that women's moralizing capacity could not yet be judged, since women were not yet enfranchised, and that "she who relinquishes the claim that womanly tenderness would be an enormous factor in national affairs, has let fall from her hand a lever as powerful and indispensable as the argument of justice itself."¹⁷

Anthony's opposition to the war locates her on the Blackwell and Garrison side of this debate, although she did not participate in the *Woman's Journal* exchange. Anthony's anti-war stance also reflected her increased commitment to the International Council of Women [ICW] throughout the 1890s, as a means to broaden the constituency of the suffrage movement.¹⁸ Formed in 1888 under the auspices of the National Woman Suffrage Association [NWSA], just prior to its merger with the American Woman Suffrage Association [AWSA] in 1890, the ICW was a mass-based, international women's network. Anthony served as an American delegate to the ICW from its inception in 1888 through the second quinquennial meeting held in London in 1899. "Organized in the interest of no one propaganda," including the "propaganda" of woman suffrage, the ICW's positive goals included a commitment to peace through arbitration.¹⁹ It was the ICW position of peaceful arbitration that Anthony advanced throughout 1898 when she opposed the war.

Given Anthony's Quaker background, her affiliation with an organization committed to peace is perhaps less surprising than her affiliation to an organi-

zation with an explicitly anti-suffrage bias. It is important to recognize, however, that the ICW was both, because it explains changes in the NAWSA strategy during this period. The executive committee of the ICW consisted of delegates from National Councils, which in turn drew their membership from any organized women's group whose purpose the National Council determined to have "national value."²⁰ In the American case, the first triennial of the National Council in 1891 included the NAWSA as well as delegates from such diverse groups as Sorosis, the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union [WCTU], and the National Free Baptist Woman's Missionary Society. While not all the members of these groups were anti-suffragists (in the case of the WCTU many members supported the suffrage cause) these groups represented women who considered a variety of social goals more primary than that of political equality for women.

Efforts by the American National Council of the ICW to increase membership throughout the 1890s consistently emphasized the all-encompassing character of the organization by down-playing the role of the NWSA in the council's origins and reminding potential affiliates that endorsing the council idea in no way implied endorsement of controversial issues, including temperance and suffrage. May Wright Sewall, president of the NCW and a member of the NAWSA, attempted to explain the relationship between the two organizations in 1893 by attributing it to an accident of birth:

One frequently hears remarks implying that to enter the National Council is to indorse [sic] woman suffrage. Sometimes such remarks indicate a fear of affiliation with the suffrage movement...When the National Woman Suffrage Association, by uniting with the American Woman Suffrage Association, lost its life to find a larger life in the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the larger body voted to enter the Council. This is the only relation which exists between the suffrage movement and the National Council. "

Despite its implicit anti-suffragism, the ICW served the needs of the American suffrage leadership by providing a vehicle to integrate the reform activities of social and political feminists within the U.S. Suffrage victories since the Civil War were few and far between, yet American women had joined a wide variety of groups interested in social reform and self-improvement. In 1890 many of these groups banded together to form the General Federation of Women's Clubs."²¹ The ICW, as noted above, performed a similar umbrella-like function. Adherence to its peace platform seemed a small price to pay in return for the opportunity to work with reform minded women, who might be convinced in

the long run that woman suffrage would hasten the achievement of a myriad of other social goals such as temperance and increased educational and professional opportunities for women.²³

Given this context Anthony's pacifism, prior to the outbreak of war with Spain, must be viewed as part of a larger strategy of accommodation pursued by the NAWSA throughout the 1890s. Stanton was particularly critical of this policy because she viewed the desire to broaden the suffrage base, by emphasizing only what women shared and ignoring their differences, as narrowing the suffrage movement to its lowest common denominator. Stanton believed in the diversity of women as individuals and saw the NAWSA's emphasis on consensus as inherently restrictive.²⁴ Stanton used every opportunity to speak publicly on the war as a means to criticize the NAWSA's narrowing political platform to votes for women, in opposition to a more comprehensive vision of equal rights that included questions of economic justice.

"You ask me to send a letter as to woman's position in regard to the war," she wrote Anthony in a letter read at the 1898 NAWSA conference in New York, "Why care for a voice in an event that may happen once in a life time, more than those of far greater importance and continually before us?" Ignoring the question of Cuba altogether, Stanton continued:

under the present competitive system existence is continual war...My message today to our coadjutors is that we have a higher duty than the demand for suffrage; we must now, at the end of fifty years of faithful service broaden our platform and consider the next step in progress, to which the signs of the times clearly point—namely, cooperation, and new principles in industrial economics.²⁵

Urging that "agitation of the broader question of philosophical socialism is now in order," Stanton sounded a radical note at a time when the suffrage movement was benefiting from the participation of conservative women like Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, intermittent president of the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association from 1876 through 1901. As Steven Buechler has recently suggested, women like Harbert saw woman suffrage as a means to protect and advance a particularly middle-class vision of the social order which was rooted in essentialized notions of womanhood and opposed to the radical individualism advocated by both Anthony and Stanton.²⁶

At other times Stanton's statements had more to do with her own sentiments on the war. In private she often sounded like many pro-war Americans demanding Cuba's release from Spanish abuse. "I suppose you know we are at war with Spain," she wrote her son Theodore, "I would like to see Spain...swept

from the face of the earth.”²⁷ In response to an inquiry from a New York reporter she quipped, “[T]he war goes bravely on and I am glad of it...I am sick of all this sentimental nonsense about ‘our boys in blue,’ and ‘wringing our mother’s hearts,’ etc....”²⁸ Stanton’s public pronouncements thus criticized both assertions that enfranchised women would have prevented war, and Anthony and the NAWSA’s accommodation of less radical views, as a political strategy for woman suffrage. Ironically, Stanton’s words indicate that in the context of turn of the century suffragism, pacifism was not an inherently radical stance.

Despite Anthony’s earlier pronouncement that “there can be no justifiable cause for war,” she was sensitive to the pro-war position Stanton advanced. Blackwell’s and Garrison’s exhortations aside, it was evident that many American suffragists shared Stanton’s view, and that patriotic sentiments among women suffragists were strong. In May 1899, less than one year after Anthony publicly urged McKinley to uphold “peace” with Spain, she told an interviewer:

The only way to get out of this war is to go through it...it is nonsense to talk about giving those guerrillas in the Philippines their liberty...If we did, the first thing they would do would be to murder and pillage every white person on the islands, Spanish and American alike.²⁹

While Anthony acknowledged that some of her “friends might think it strange that I do not join them in protest of the war,” her abandonment of the anti-war position reflected a critical evaluation of American political realities in 1899, and a subsequent move away from the peace policies of the ICW. Her change of heart also reflected an implicit distinction between war with Spain and Filipino pacification. With hindsight, Anthony’s pacifism appears politically expedient and easily abandoned. The ways in which Anthony’s pro-war position were similarly expedient requires further exploration.³⁰

Expansion: Suffragists as a “Confused Minority”

Christopher Lasch has demonstrated that the expansionist debate generated by the Spanish-American War pushed the question of national citizenship into the forefront of public discussion.³¹ Expansionists easily combined economic imperatives with notions of manifest destiny to justify annexation. Anti-expansionists, however, claimed that annexation would both compound the “race problem” and corrupt Republican government by undermining the principle of a just government deriving its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. Congressional expansionists, predominantly northern Republicans, reminded the anti-expansionists of U.S. Indian policy and suggested that Congress always

had “wards,” to whom the “consent doctrine” did not apply because of their inherent incapacity for self-government.³² In their zeal for territorial aggrandizement and foreign markets, Lasch argues, northern Republicans moved closer to the position of southern Democrats who believed that suffrage was not a natural right. In the process Republicans relinquished the moral ground on which they based their extension of the franchise to freedmen at the end of the Civil War.

Central to Lasch’s explanation of this debate is that both the pro and anti positions were rooted in notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority and a “pseudo-Darwinian” world view, regardless of whether or not one supported American expansion into the Pacific. Reginald Horseman’s recent examination of the origins of American racial Anglo-Saxonism supports Lasch’s findings.³³ Horseman locates the solidification of racial thinking in American political culture as early as 1850. By that time, he argues, the opponents of American expansion who based their opposition on liberal assumptions of the inherent equality of all individuals were a “confused minority.” Considering the conflation of liberal principles and racial thinking which characterizes Anthony and other suffragists’ discussion of annexation, Horseman’s label is an appropriate one.

It was Blackwell, the anti-war advocate, who early in the war, first linked expansion to woman suffrage. Blackwell argued that if American women “are not willing to live forever in subjection, let them demand the application of the republican principle to these outlying territories [Hawaii and the Philippines].”³⁴ Blackwell’s suggestion, that women as a group had the most at stake in preventing the corruption of republican ideals by imperialism, was not lost on his audience. As the imperialist/anti-imperialist debate gathered momentum in late 1898, most suffragists who participated in the exchange took an anti-imperialist position.

Garrison, not surprisingly, given his opposition to the war, made the most extreme case for suffrage opposition to U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and other island territories:

Behold a country that has had its century of dishonor with the Indians and its infamy with the negro, prating of its new found duty to swarms of people of whose nature and needs it knows nothing!...The women who rebel against taxation without representation will have a difficult task to prove they are entitled to suffrage more than the disfranchised masses of the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii].³⁵

In a letter on “Our Duty to the Philippines,” a Vermont correspondent to the *Woman’s Journal* questioned whether “expansion necessarily leads to imperi-

alism," as the anti-expansionists implied. She suggested that "the principle [of Republican government] might be secured even if ignorant races should have to go through a preparatory course of tutelage," before being given the ballot.³⁶ Demanding the extension of the suffrage to annexed peoples, she did not see annexation itself as inherently problematic despite Blackwell's and Garrison's attempts to problematize the issue.

Carrie Lane Chapman Catt, who would succeed Anthony as President of the NAWSA in 1900, echoed this view arguing that "the manifest duty of the United States is to so direct the affairs of these peoples [Filipinos] as to lead them to establish a wise, stable tolerant government." Chapman was careful to point out that this would not be an easy task, "since they range through all stages from the primitive savage to the civilized man." Regardless, she continued, "the situation is one full of humiliation for American women."³⁷ The humiliation to which Chapman referred was the necessity of extending the franchise to "savages" in order to uphold republican principles while white women remained without the vote.

Neither Anthony or Stanton would state her position on expansion publicly. Stanton, however, sent a letter to the *Woman's Journal* written by her daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch that condemned the proposition. Making a comparison between the American and British cases, Blatch argued that colonialism created an imbalance of the sexes within the borders of the mother country which necessarily weighed heavily on women. "Do the women of America wish to out-number the men of their country; do they wish prostitution to increase; do they wish to be pushed out of their work of home building into that of field and factory?" If not, warned Blatch, and by inference her mother, "[American women] needed to tell their men-folk that it is not the nation's destiny to raise the Filipinos and lower their own women to the level of Continental Europe."³⁸ Blatch's critique is an excellent example of Horseman's "confused minority." Although Blatch opposed U.S. expansion in the Philippines, she did so primarily because of its implications for white women. Further, Blatch used the racial reasoning her expansionist opponents relied on to justify annexation, suggesting that if American women were willing to put up with the necessary sacrifices colonialism entailed they could "raise the Filipinos" up from savagery.

Anthony's opposition to the war, and her private correspondence with Stanton, suggests that she too held the anti-expansion position. In December 1898 she wrote Stanton about a patriotic organization formed to honor heroes of the war whose membership was open to whites only. Anthony, suggesting that American imperialism merely exported American racism, wrote "On every hand *American Civilization* [her emphasis] which we are introducing into isles

of the Atlantic and Pacific is putting its heel on the head of the negro race.”³⁹ Given Anthony’s awareness of the racist implications of the civilization/savagery dichotomy it is surprising, then, that we find Anthony making statements about Filipino barbarism to the press less than six months later. That Anthony did so reflects the inconsistency of her racial thinking with respect to non-western people. At the very least it suggests that she too was part of the “confused minority” when she opposed expansion on the basis of liberal principles.

The Hawaiian Appeal: Suffrage Racism in an Imperial Context

In January 1899 Anthony and the officers of the NAWSA sent copies of the “Hawaiian Appeal” to senators and members of Congress. “We respectfully request that, in the qualifications for voters in the proposed constitution for the new Territory of Hawaii, the word “male” be omitted.”⁴⁰ The justification for this request was included in the body of the petition:

The declared intention of the United States in annexing the Hawaiian Islands is to give them the benefits of the most advanced civilization and it is a truism that the progress of civilization in every country is measured by the approach of women toward the ideal of equal rights with men...it would be inopportune to impose upon our new possessions abroad the antiquated restrictions which we are fast discarding at home.

We, therefore, petition your Honorable Body that, upon whatever conditions and qualifications the right of suffrage is granted to Hawaiian men, it shall be granted for Hawaiian women.⁴¹

Congress’ role in drafting the Hawaiian constitution was relatively unique. Unlike other territories which applied for statehood after ratifying conventions in which states set up their own qualifications for the franchise, the Hawaiian bill was a federal document which limited the franchise to men. Stanton and Anthony were concerned that the bill would create a dangerous precedent, particularly considering the prospect of American annexation of the Philippines. If federally administered territories no longer had the right to apply for statehood with woman suffrage constitutions, then the suffrage battle would be made that much more difficult. Conversely, if Congress could be persuaded to drop the word “male” from the Hawaiian bill, it would create a federal precedent with vastly different implications. The “Hawaiian Appeal” explicitly addressed the potential precedent that passage of the Hawaiian bill would set:

Heretofore Congress has ignored our plea for the rights of women as citizens, but it has never legislated against these rights... If the Congress of the United States today enters upon a system of class legislation, and of the restricting of rights of even the privileged class, the men, who can tell where it will end?⁴³

Stanton's and Anthony's enthusiasm for the "Appeal" was consistent with their overall strategy of gaining women suffrage through constitutional amendment. Stanton and Anthony had both despaired when the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) defined U.S. citizens as male for the first time. Both women had been particularly upset knowing that the impetus for constitutional reform generated by the Civil War and Reconstruction could not easily be regenerated in the near future. Yet the Spanish-American War raised the question of national citizenship anew. By co-authoring the "Hawaiian Appeal," Stanton and Anthony worked together to channel women's support of the war into a strategic means of keeping the NAWSA from entirely abandoning federalist strategies, in favor of a state by state approach, that merger with the American Woman Suffrage Association and rising southern influence had wrought.

Although the "Appeal" called for the enfranchisement of Hawaiian women on the same terms as Hawaiian men, it was not an example of natural rights arguments for the vote. The "Appeal" was premised on the belief that if Hawaiian men were enfranchised through a federal dictate that precluded the enfranchisement of white women in the future, Hawaii would become an anti-woman suffrage haven, as would all territories accrued through the war. "Hawaii may offer advantages to Americans to settle there..., but politically speaking the only women of this country who could consistently go there would be the anti-suffrage association," wrote Anthony and the NAWSA officers.⁴³ Further, despite arguing for women's enfranchisement on the same terms as men, the "Appeal" suggested that suffragists would accept educational requirements for the vote for all Hawaiians:

Consistently with their principles suffragists can ask for nothing less than full justice, which would make no distinctions of sex, whatever other limitations might be thought necessary for the time being...⁴⁴

While Stanton had long been an advocate of educational qualifications for the vote, Anthony's participation in this type of expediency argument was new, and reflects her belief in race hierarchy with respect to Hawaiians.

The racial distinctions between Anglo-Saxons, Hawaiians and Filipinos was further elaborated in a series of statements made by Anthony in defense of the

"Appeal." In a "Statement on Territorial Constitutions," Anthony argued, going beyond Stanton, that to deprive the women of "our possessions" of the franchise was an even more serious matter than to deprive American women of the ballot because of "the half-savage character of the men of these countries."⁴⁵ Anthony went on to link U.S. expansion to British imperialism arguing that to disenfranchise Hawaiian women was similar to the introduction of English law into Indian society. Paraphrasing British suffragist Millicent Garret Fawcett, Anthony noted "we give the Hindoo [*sic*] the slavery of the Anglo-Saxon wife, but we do not give the Hindoo that spirit of Anglo-Saxon marriage and home life which has made that slavery often scarcely felt."⁴⁶ Couched in the rhetoric of protection for Hawaiian and Filipina women, Anthony participated in the idealization of Anglo-Saxon civilization.

Anthony's reference to British imperialism as a model for American women was apt. As noted earlier Anthony had spent the previous decade involved in the ICW, which throughout the 1890s was largely an imperialist organization. Despite its pretensions to international scope, the non-western countries in the ICW were primarily English colonies or protectorates represented by English women living abroad.⁴⁷ Premised on the continued strength of the British Empire rather than efforts to form sororal bonds with native women, the ICW institutionalized developing notions of white women as civilizing agents. When Anthony abandoned the peace platform of the ICW she did not abandon the ICW entirely, rather she retained its model of international relationships between women premised on white women's ability to uplift and protect "inferior" peoples. For example, Anthony noted:

If to-day, in the Hawaiian Islands or in Cuba we fail to recognize the native women, who still hold something of the primitive prestige of womanhood...we shall not only do them an injustice, but we shall forcibly give the Hawaiian and Cuban men lessons in the wrong side and not the right side of our domestic relations. ⁴⁸

Immediately after the "Hawaiian Appeal" became public it was attacked in the press by a writer named "D." "D" presented a two-pronged critique of the appeal and its authors. Noting that the "Appeal" represented Stanton and Anthony's tacit approval of the colonial project, "D" advanced arguments in opposition to imperialism which echoed Blatch's warning about increased prostitution. "D" inquired, "Are they [Stanton and Anthony] informed of the reason why the American officer finds the finest Cuban and the finest Porto [*sic*] Rican woman so agreeable to his taste, and so admirable to his sense of what constitutes womanhood?" Further "D" was aware that the "Appeal," if success-

ful, might serve as a model for governing all territories gained through the war. "Do they fancy that among what they term our new possessions, we have acquired a Utopia, where every black, every brown, and every white woman can at least write her name... or read a word of the Constitution?," he asked, "or do not any of these things matter when the "consent of the governed" seems to have lost its virtue as a theory."⁴⁹

In Stanton and Anthony's response to "D" it is evident that they shared "D's" perception of Hawaiian, Filipino and Cuban women as vastly inferior. In response to "D's" allusions to prostitution Stanton and Anthony conceded:

the preference of our sires and sons for Spanish women, if true, would be as great a calamity for Anglo-Saxon civilization as if our women should all prefer Spanish men. Fortunately...even those women demanding political rights...know that the best type of race yet attained is Anglo-Saxon.⁵⁰

Anthony's and Stanton's acknowledgment of Anglo-Saxon superiority and their assertions that suffragists shared this heritage, explicitly links suffragism with illiberal racial politics. Further, Anthony and Stanton participated in the politicization of sexuality considered a common feature of colonialism, in a manner which emphasized what suffragists held in common with white men, the preservation of racial purity, as opposed to emphasizing what they shared with non-white women, political discrimination based on sex.⁵¹

In response to "D's" suggestions that Hawaiian, Filipino and Cuban women were illiterate, they stated that it was of little consequence when faced with the possibility of a federal precedent denying woman suffrage in the future. "In making our demands for educated women in the United States," they wrote, "we do not deem it necessary to consider the status of those in Indian Reserves or on Southern Plantations."⁵² Originally woman suffragists had been highly concerned with the status of those on "Southern Plantations." That Anthony and Stanton denied the woman suffrage movement's abolitionist beginnings was an implicit reminder that white women were potential allies, not opponents, to the establishment of white male dominance over "inferior" races.



The 1899 call for the NAWSA convention held in Grand Rapids, Michigan declared that woman suffrage was of vital interest "to millions of women—both the women of our new possessions...and the women of the United States, whose

sons will be brought into intimate connection with Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico [*sic*] and the Phillipines.”⁵³ It was during this convention that Anthony is said to have “put the NAWSA on record as regarding the two causes [black suffrage and woman suffrage] as completely separate.”⁵⁴ Giving in to the wishes of white southern delegates in order to preserve consensus within the NAWSA, Anthony prevented the passage of a resolution which would condemn Jim Crow practices on southern railroads.⁵⁵ This incident has been read as evidence of Anthony’s waning leadership in the NAWSA and the coming of age of a new generation of suffrage leaders like Carrie Lane Chapman Catt who assumed the Presidency in 1900 when Anthony stepped down. Under Catt’s leadership the NAWSA endorsed educational qualifications for the vote during its 1903 convention in New Orleans and “sealed the new pact between woman suffrage and white supremacy.”⁵⁶

Considering Anthony’s statements on Hawaii, the Philippines and Cuba, her responsibility for the NAWSA’s future direction must be acknowledged. The 1899 convention took place several months after the “Hawaiian Appeal” was sent to congress and Anthony had defended it in the press. By that time Anthony had publicly distinguished between white woman suffrage and Hawaiian women’s suffrage and supported educational qualifications for the vote for all Hawaiians in her quest for a federal precedent establishing woman suffrage in annexed territories. Her actions actively “antagonized” race and sex as claims for the suffrage. While it is primarily in Anthony’s discussions of Hawaii and the Philippines that we see her privileging her Anglo-Saxon heritage and trafficking in the racial currency so pervasive in late nineteenth-century mainstream American thought, her actions insured, in part, that black women would be excluded from the NAWSA in later years. Ignoring the imperial context in which suffrage racism developed is to miss more than half the story and to forget that in 1899, when southern delegates prevented the NAWSA from condemning Jim Crow in the South, the NAWSA had convened to discuss the issue of “sons” and their “intimate contact” with foreign women, a proposition rooted in notions of race hierarchy and Anglo-Saxon superiority.

The NAWSA leadership, including Anthony, perceived U.S. expansion as a “crisis as vital as that of the Revolution, or the era of Reconstruction.”⁵⁷ It is important that historians view imperialism as no less critical to the development of the suffrage movement than did the suffrage leaders themselves. For Anthony, the possibility of American empire in the Pacific was crucial to her abandonment of the equal rights tradition on which nineteenth-century suffragism was based and her adoption of expediency arguments for the vote premised on racial hierarchy.

This study of women's participation in the politics of American expansion responds to the suggestion that historians begin to determine the "contextually specific ways in which politics constructs gender and gender constructs politics."⁵⁸ Taking expansion seriously effectively provides one window into the complex story of "how the differences among women are constituted historically in identifiable social processes"—in this case, imperialism.⁵⁹ Placing the interactive relationship between the construction of race, gender and the nation state at the center of a historical narrative this study seeks to inextricably link the dual processes of state building and the construction of basic categories of American identity.

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NOTES

1. Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and the 'The Indian Woman,' 1865-1915," in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, eds. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 137.
2. See Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement: 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) and Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1975).
3. It is important to note that not all expediency arguments for the vote were socially and politically conservative. Many early twentieth-century woman's rights advocates who premised their demands on women's unique abilities as women were concerned with issues of social and economic justice. On this topic see for example Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).
4. For Stanton as a model of nineteenth-century white women's racism, see bell hooks, "Racism and Feminism: The Issue of Accountability," in *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, ed. bell hooks (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 127.
5. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: W. Morrow, 1984), 125. Ellen Carol DuBois notes that Anthony attempted political alliances with "racist" Democrats in the 1860s and that this would have far reaching effects on the future of the suffrage movement. She attributes these alliances primarily to political opportunism. Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of and Independent Women's Movement in the United States, 1848-1869* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 94-96.
6. Ellen Carol DuBois, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*, [ECS-SBA Reader] (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), xvi.
7. Ida Husted Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony: A Story of the Evolution of the Status of Women*, 3 vols. (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1908).
8. Burton, "White Woman's Burden," Louise Newman, "The White Woman's Burden: Constructing Woman's Rights on the Back of the Primitive," Paper presented at the Organization of American Historians, Chicago, April 1992, Gail Landsman, "Images of the Indians in the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992), and Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's*

Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

9. Susan B. Anthony and the National American Woman Suffrage Association Officers, "Memorial to Congress on Behalf of the Women of Hawaii," *Woman's Tribune* 28 January 1899. Stanton claimed co-authorship of the petition in a public letter, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, "The Women of Hawaii: Woman Suffrage in our New Possessions," *Woman's Journal* 28 January 1899. Harper also notes Stanton's participation in drafting the petition, Harper, *Life and Work*, 125.
10. "Do Women Still Favor the War?: The Question Answered by Many of the Peace Loving Sex," *New York Tribune* 31 July 1898.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Founded in 1870 by members of the American Woman Suffrage Association, the *Woman's Journal* was one of the largest suffragist newspapers.
13. Ellen M. Henrotin, "Women and Cuba," *Woman's Journal* 16 April 1898.
14. Henry Blackwell, "The War with Spain," *Woman's Journal* 16 April 1898.
15. William Lloyd Garrison, "Women and War," *Woman's Journal* 30 April 1898.
16. Florence Burleigh, "Mr. Garrison Partly Right," *Woman's Journal* 28 May 1898.
17. Helen Adelaide Shaw, "A Challenge to the War Remonstrants," *Woman's Journal* 11 June 1898.
18. For a concise history of the ICW see Edith F. Hurwitz, "The International Sisterhood," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Rennate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977) and Mineke Bosch and Anne Marie Kloosterman, *Politics and Friendship: Letters from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1902-1942* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990). For a brief account of Anthony's involvement in the ICW see Harper, *Life and Work*, 1135-1147.
19. The pro-peace policies of the ICW appear to have been rooted in essentialist notions of women as inherently more peaceful although this question is a matter for further research. International Council of Women, *Report of the Transactions of the Second Quincennial Meeting, 1899*, ed., Countess of Aberdeen (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900).
20. Article IV of the NCW constitution states that "any society of women the nature of whose work is satisfactory to the Executive Committee, either as to its undoubtedly national character, or national value, may become a member of the council...." National Council of Women of the United States, *History and Minutes, 1888-1898*, ed., Louise Barnum Robbins (Boston: E.B. Stillings and Co., 1898).
21. *Ibid.*
22. For a brief discussion of the woman's club movement see Flexner, "The Growth of Women's Organizations," chap. in *Century of Struggle, 182-196*.
23. The American National Council of Women, during its 1897 executive session resolved "to fully endorse all the principles of the organization of peace and arbitration, [and] adopt the peace flag, always to be hung with its own symbols at all meetings of the National Council of Women." National Council of Women of the United States, *History and Minutes, 1888-1898*. For a discussion of the formation of the ICW as part of the North American woman suffrage movement's shift to policies of expediency in their efforts to get the vote see Bosch and Kloosterman, *Politics and Friendship*.
24. For a discussion of Stanton's hostility to the NAWSA's growing conservatism in the 1890s and the individualist ethic on which Stanton's feminism was based see, DuBois, "Stanton and the Future of Suffrage Radicalism," in *ECS-SBA Reader, 182-200*.
25. Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, 27 April 1898, in *The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, eds. Patricia G. Holland and Ann D. Gordon (Deleware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992) [Papers] and "The War a Minor Question," *Woman's Journal* 14 May 1898.

26. For an in depth of discussion of Harbert and the rise of a "social" feminist perspective within the suffrage movement see Steven Buechler, "Elizabeth Boynton Harbert and the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1876-1896," *Signs* 13 (1987).
27. Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Theodore Weld Stanton, 13 May 1898, *Papers*.
28. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Opinion of the War," *True Republic* 8 June 1898.
29. Susan B. Anthony, "Interview on War," *Democrat and Chronicle* 15 May 1899.
30. In the historiography of American imperialism, Anthony's pacifist position was highly anomalous. For a discussion of the degree of popular support for the war see, William Appleman William, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1959) and Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).
31. Christopher Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," *Journal of Southern History* 24 (1958). Lasch's discussion is derived from an examination of the 1899 *Congressional Record* and other popular pamphlets.
32. For a discussion of U.S. Indian policy as the basis for U.S. colonialism in the Philippines see Walter Williams, "United States Indian Policy in the Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism," *Journal of American History* 66 (1980).
33. Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 249-272.
34. Henry Blackwell, "Self Government v. Imperialism," *Woman's Journal* 5 May 1898.
35. William Garrison, "War and Imperialism Fatal to Self Government," *Woman's Journal* 27 August 1898.
36. S.E.B., "Our Duty to the Philippines," *Woman's Journal* 9 September 1898.
37. Carrie Lane Chapman, "Our New Responsibilities," *Woman's Journal* 1 October 1898.
38. Stanton's sympathy with Blatch's analysis is derived from her desire to publish Blatch's critique. Harriot Stanton Blatch, "Mrs. Stanton Blatch on Imperialism," *Woman's Journal* 29 October 1898.
39. Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 2 December 1898, in DuBois, *ECS-SBA Reader*, 289-290.
40. Anthony, "Memorial," 1899.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Susan B. Anthony, "Statement on Territorial Constitutions," *Sun* 21 May 1899.
46. *Ibid.*
47. International Council of Women, *Report, 1899*. Accounts of the ICW do not assess it as an institution that contributed to the maintenance of imperial relationships between western and non-western women. See Hurwitz, "The International Sisterhood," and Bosch and Kloosterman, *Politics and Friendship*.
48. Anthony, "Statement," 1899.
49. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, "The Women of Hawaii: Woman Suffrage in Our New Possessions," [A response to "D." "D's" text cited in article] *Woman's Journal* 28 January 1899.
50. *Ibid.*
51. For example see Ann Stoller, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed., Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992).
52. Stanton and Anthony, "The Women of Hawaii," 1899.
53. Rachel Foster Avery, ed., *Proceedings of the Thirty First Annual Convention of the National*

- American Woman Suffrage Association, 1899* (Warren, Ohio: Press of Perry the Printer, n.d.).
54. Kraditor, *Ideas*, 169.
 55. This incident is recounted at length in Kraditor, *Ideas*, 169-173.
 56. Kraditor, *Ideas*, 200.
 57. Avery, *Proceedings*, 1899.
 58. Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986) 1070.
 59. Tessi Liu, "Teaching the Differences Among Women From a Historical Perspective: Rethinking Race and Gender as Social Categories," *Women's Studies International Forum* 14 (1991) 265, 268.

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