Citizens of Empire: Puerto Rico, Status, and Constitutional Change

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Citizens of Empire: Puerto Rico, Status, and Constitutional Change

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This Article proposes a new account of how empire became constitutional. When the United States took a deliberate imperial turn in 1898-1899 by annexing Puerto Rico and the Philippines, many jurists thought that the Constitution automatically made these islands proto-states and their residents U.S. citizens with full constitutional protections. Three decades later, this view was no longer mainstream. Contrary to standard accounts, this momentous change was neither quick nor the result of unilateral judicial action. To perceive dynamics extending beyond the judiciary, this study examines the attempts to win U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans by their first representative in Washington, Federico Degetau y González. Aware that constitutional meaning was not exclusively the province of courts, he brought claims to U.S. citizenship before administrators, legislators, and the president as well. Officials responded with evasions through concessions. When Degetau sought a right as a citizen, they granted him it on other grounds. Meanings of U.S. citizenship changed as officials reduced the rights that would accompany a grant of citizenship while envisioning without endorsing the possibility of noncitizen U.S. nationals. That novel idea – like the idea of U.S. lands that would never be states and U.S. people with less than full constitutional rights – ripened into conventional wisdom and eventually still-binding doctrine. This suggests that the constitutional law of empire emerged as judges together with administrative and elected officials engaged in an iterative process in which they deployed forms of creative ambiguity to manage perceived conflicts between Constitution and empire.

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Resident Commissioner Federico Degetau y González had a constitutional problem. As the first elected representative of Puerto Rico in Washington following U.S. invasion and annexation of the island in 1898-1899, he sought for his countrymen legal recognition as U.S. citizens. The status, he presumed, would bring with it full constitutional protections for islanders and classification of Puerto Rico as a traditional territory soon to be a state. In believing that the Constitution guaranteed these legal outcomes to his homeland, Degetau embraced a view held – and opposed – by many turn-of-the-last-century jurists: Constitution constrained empire. Annexation accorded status and rights. A quarter century later, Degetau’s side had lost decisively. Its views had ceased to be mainstream.

INTRODUCTION

This paper proposes a new account of how empire became constitutional. It advances two interrelated claims. First, in 1898 and not twenty-five years later U.S. citizenship appeared to many to promise Puerto Ricans numerous substantive rights and full inclusion of their homeland within the U.S. polity. Second, judges, administrators, and elected officials all contributed to these and related constitutional changes through a slow, tentative, and iterative process characterized by creativity and ambiguity.

Several corollaries follow. As Degetau realized – and contrary to what has come to be the standard rendering – this sea change in constitutional thought was not the quick product of unilateral judicial action having little to do with citizenship.¹ It was also not – here in contraposition to scholarship on roles of judge and turn-of-the-last-century administrators – the result of purely political dynamics divorced from courts, administration, and law.² And it did not – as some work implies – merely confirm what the Slaughter-House Cases (1873) had long before declared or made a fait accompli:

¹ See infra notes 21, 96, 329, 342, 350-359 and accompanying text.
² See infra notes 5-10, 14-18, 48, 94, 126 and accompanying text.
the transformation of U.S. citizenship into a relatively inconsequential status.³

The puzzle that these insights help solve is how, despite a dearth of unambiguous, far-reaching Supreme Court holdings, conventional understandings of the constitutional order shifted: away from according U.S. citizenship and robust rights to all nontribal U.S. people and toward acceptance of U.S. colonialism. Apparently presuming that such momentous legal changes trailed correspondingly important, new, and binding judicial statements, much work in the area seeks an elusive prize: dramatic holdings in the series of post-1900 Insular Cases through which the Supreme Court addressed the status of newly acquired U.S. people and places.⁴ Other studies question whether law even factored as a causal force in these and most other official matters.⁵ And it is conventional casebook wisdom that those like Degetau who brought early-20th-century legal claims based on U.S. citizenship misperceived the status, which the Court had stripped of significance more than a decade before.⁶

This project navigates these scholarly shoals in part by building upon recent work reasserting the prominent and complex roles of administration, courts, and law in the late-19th- and early-20th-century U.S. state.⁷ Such work insists that the language of law

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³ 83 U.S. 36. On characterizations of the Slaughter-House Cases as having largely foreclosed most claims predicated on U.S. citizenship, see infra notes 6, 56. On overstatements of the extent to which the Slaughter-House Cases represented judicial abandonment of former slaves, see PAMELA BRANDWEIN, RETHINKING THE JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION 53 (2011).
⁴ See infra notes 350-354.
⁵ See, e.g., FINLEY PETER DUNNE, MR. DOOLEY'S OPINIONS 26 (1901) (making this point, via a fictional commentator, by writing “th' supreme coort follows th' iliction returns”); infra note 8.
⁶ See infra note 56; supra note 3.
⁷ On the need for the corrective, see, for example, Paul Frymer, Law and American Political Development, 33 L. & SOC. INQUIRY 779 (2008) (arguing that American Political Development scholars have tended to underestimate the institutional nature of courts); Keith E. Whittington, Once More Unto the Breach: PostBehavioralist Approaches to Judicial Politics, 25 L. & SOC. INQUIRY 601, 613 (2000) (calling for a better understanding in American Political Development of how law influences judges); Jerry L. Mashaw, Federal Administration and Administrative Law in the Gilded Age, 119 YALE L.J. 1362, 1365 (2010) (offering a corrective to American Political Development accounts of muscular administration only emerging in the 1930s); Reuel Schiller, “Saint George and the Dragon”: Courts and the Development of the Administrative State in Twentieth-Century America, 17 J. POL’Y HIST. 110 (2005) (noting the scarcity of American Political Development work concerning the judiciary); Thomas M. Keck, Party Politics or Judicial
structured exercises of power by officials throughout the federal government, that those exercises of power altered law, and that courts were but one among many state institutions contributing to the dynamic.\textsuperscript{8} Administrative entities were others, with some securing top-flight legal talent that aimed to shape and follow the law in the myriad disputes that they were the first – and sometimes only – governmental bodies to adjudicate.\textsuperscript{9} This work challenges scholars to show how courts, administration, and law interacted with each other and other state institutions to alter U.S. governance and constitutional meaning across time.\textsuperscript{10}

The protagonist, period, and topic of this case study – Degetau’s early-20\textsuperscript{th}-century struggles to secure U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans and their legacy – are promising ones through which to examine these dynamics. In 1898-1899, the United States took a deliberate turn toward empire by annexing first Hawai‘i and then – following a war in which it invaded several Spanish imperial holdings – Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.\textsuperscript{11} Doing so raised hard questions about island and mainland constitutionalism and their interrelationship. Within Puerto Rico, the change in sovereignty presaged a change in constitutional structure and derivative changes

\textsuperscript{8} See infra notes 94, 96, 313-314, 343-344. Decrying work portraying courts’ actions as wholly derivative of other political forces, scholars associated with American Political Development have begun to call for work that brings law back in in the ways described above. See, e.g., Frymer, supra note 7 (collecting sources).

\textsuperscript{9} See infra note 127.


\textsuperscript{11} See infra notes 34, 52.
in rights, status, and self-government – perhaps, as Degetau hoped, bringing liberal reforms and home rule, and perhaps not.

On the mainland, the U.S. imperial turn brought debates over the compatibility of empire and Constitution to the forefront of U.S. law and politics. Many mainlanders believed that the Constitution barred the United States from holding colonized U.S. peoples without extending them U.S. citizenship, full constitutional rights, and eventual statehood. Many others – and often the same people – believed that denying each of these rights to newly acquired populations was necessary to U.S. imperial success. The first half decade of the 20th century was formative in establishing the ambiguous-yet-subordinate place of the new possessions of the United States in its constitutional system.

During the period, while campaigning to be and then serving as Resident Commissioner, Degetau studied and joined constitutional debates concerning newly acquired U.S. people and places. In Washington, this brilliant lawyer and keen, engaged observer of legal-political interactions among state actors steeped himself in questions of Puerto Rican status and rights. Bringing to advocacy of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans a fluid and experimental approach in which he exploited opportunities as they arose, Degetau tested the bounds of varied federal officials’ ability and willingness to recognize his countrymen as fellow citizens.

Degetau well knew that the state with which he interacted was not one solely dominated by – in Stephen Skowronek’s memorable phrase – “courts and parties.” Judges, administrators, presidents, presidents,
and congressmen all played roles in constitutional change and adjudication.\textsuperscript{15} Individuals within each group noted as colleagues elsewhere in the state addressed constitutional questions arising out of the U.S. imperial turn. And actors within all these groups addressed such questions themselves.\textsuperscript{16} Constrained by an official landscape that they could also alter, they thus exercised bounded autonomy in addressing constitutional disputes.\textsuperscript{17}

Though often overlooked by existing scholarship, U.S. administrators were among crucial agents of early-20\textsuperscript{th}-century constitutional changes concerning U.S. empire. Through adjudicating disputes over Puerto Rican rights: They created potential judicial test cases. And they modeled – and altered the stakes – for the Court of various approaches to judging the scope of administrative influence in the U.S. state, see, for example, Richard R. John, \textit{Rethinking the Early American State}, 40 \textit{Polity} 332 (2008).


\textsuperscript{16} In addition to the instances detailed below, see Erman, supra note 15, at 1-195. Compare, e.g., Gordon Silverstein, \textit{Law’s Allure in American Politics and Policy: What It Is, What It Is Not, and What It Might Be Yet}, 35 \textit{L. & Soc. Inquiry} 1077, 1089 (2010) (arguing that state actors may act in conjunction without consciously cooperating), with WHITTINGTON, supra note 15, at 98-100 (describing how elected federal officials may signal their desires to courts); Luke M. Milligan, \textit{Congressional End-Run: The Ignored Constraint on Judicial Review}, 45 \textit{Ga. L. Rev.} 211 (2010) (similar); cf. Silverstein, supra, at 1080 (“[T]o fully appreciate and understand how law shapes and constrains politics and policy, we have to consider the iterated interaction between and among these institutions . . . .”). Variations on this question are longstanding in legal history. See, e.g., Gordon, supra note 7. For more recent works along these lines, see, for example, Frymer, supra note 7, at 794, 782 (reviewing work arguing that “no one paradigmatic understanding of judicial decision making can independently explain the Court’s logic” and seeking new inquiries into the relationship between an institutional understanding of courts and how “courts play an often central and vital role in enhancing the power of the modern state”).

\textsuperscript{17} See infra note 126.
constitutionality of U.S. empire. In some instances, they proposed legal underpinnings for U.S. empire that came to be reflected in Supreme Court doctrine.\textsuperscript{18}

Degetau’s activities and networks also reveal lost legal transformations. Most immediate is that of U.S. citizenship, which Degetau relentlessly sought for Puerto Ricans in 1900-1905. At the dawn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, U.S. citizenship was a consequential status, though also an embattled one. Jurists throughout and beyond the federal government trumpeted its importance, insisted upon its broad distribution within the states, and sought and discussed the many subconstitutional rights that attached to it, even as they recognized the paucity of judicially enforceable constitutional rights that it carried. Perceived by many to be too substantive for Puerto Ricans immediately after 1898, it had come to be referred to as a “perfectly empty gift” by the time the political branches naturalized Puerto Ricans – but not Filipinos – in 1916-1917.\textsuperscript{19}

Somewhat counterintuitively, recognition that courts lacked sole responsibility for legal change reveals as important to-date-underemphasized cases, doctrines, and judicial acts. An Insular Case in which Degetau participated as amicus curiæ, Gonzales v. Williams (1904),\textsuperscript{20} illustrates, illuminating how justices were one set of actors among several contributing to the slow decline in the promise of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. Today, the Insular Cases are best known for introducing into U.S. law the still-binding doctrine of territorial nonincorporation, which marks some U.S. possessions as not necessarily destined for statehood and deprives those resident

\textsuperscript{18} For other work along these lines, see Anuj C. Desai, Wiretapping Before the Wires: The Post Office and the Birth of Communications Privacy, 60 STAN. L. REV. 553 (2007) (suggesting that federal legislation and administrative practice lay foundations for modern Fourth Amendment jurisprudence); Reuel E. Schiller, Free Speech and Expertise: Administrative Censorship and the Birth of the Modern First Amendment, 86 VA. L. REV.1 (2000) (variously describing instances of administrative regulations of speech being supplanted by and surviving judicial regulation under the First Amendment); Lee, supra note 10, at 809 & n.23 (collecting sources “focused exclusively on the work of the President’s closest legal advisors”).

\textsuperscript{19} See infra note 292 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{20} 192 U.S. 1 (1904).
there of constitutional protection of non-fundamental rights.\textsuperscript{21} In Gonzales, a unanimous Court settled another controversy, holding that Puerto Ricans were not aliens, hence not subject to immigration laws, while reserving the harder question whether they were U.S. citizens. The reservation unsettled the presumption that early-20\textsuperscript{th}-century administrative and judicial officials and claimants frequently shared with Degetau that citizenship was identical to nonalienage. The Court’s evasion by concession signaled to many that U.S. citizenship would come to Puerto Rico, if at all, via the political branches. And as numerous other federal officials also evaded claims to citizenship by extending islanders various rights, the benefits that Puerto Ricans could expect to secure as a result of naturalization shrank.

The Gonzales decision thus came to matter because of its contribution to interrelated processes of constitutional change and colonial governance already unfolding across diverse parts of the U.S. state. Proceeding as one – albeit unique – legal and political actor among many, the Gonzales Court combined creativity and ambiguity to facilitate U.S. empire without explicitly altering the constitutional law of U.S. citizenship.\textsuperscript{22}

As we will see, recognizing this dynamic in Gonzales points the way to a wider reinterpretation of the Insular Cases. On most scholarly accounts, the Supreme Court in 1901-1905 issued broad holdings that laid the constitutional foundations for U.S. empire.\textsuperscript{23} But as Gonzales illustrates, the Supreme Court did not always rush into the breach. Through evasions, it also sometimes created space for nonjudicial federal officials to maneuver and innovate.\textsuperscript{24} This suggests that Gonzales and the Insular Cases more generally may be best understood as part of an iterative, joint process of constitutional change that spanned the federal government, unfolded across

\textsuperscript{21} See infra notes 350-359 and accompanying text. For works defining and listing Insular Cases, see, for example, SPARROW, supra note 13; Christina Duffy Burnett, A Note on the Insular Cases, in FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra note 13, at 389.

\textsuperscript{22} See infra note 243 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{23} See, e.g., infra notes 329, 342, 350-354 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{24} On policymakers implementing policies iteratively in interaction with courts rather than risking repeated reversals, see, for example, Silverstein, supra note 16, at 1080-84, 1087-92.
decades, and proceeded through creative ambiguity. Confirming and detailing the mechanics of the process is grist for another project. This study seeks to bring its broad contours into view: As I discuss at greater length in the Conclusion, close study of what Degetau did, saw, and helped set in motion both demonstrates the close relationship between officials’ shared commitments to law and processes of constitutional change and uncovers particular official acts that set such change in motion.

Five parts – and the Conclusion – follow this Introduction. The first sketches Degetau’s background and then traces his and certain U.S. officials’ responses to consolidation in 1898-1900 of U.S. rule in Puerto Rico. Those responses unfolded in the shadow of the Constitution, and Degetau’s included his development of a theory aimed at reconciling major strands of U.S. and Puerto Rican thought on constitutionalism. Part II provides a brief account of relevant aspects of the 1901 Insular Cases, the Court’s first major – and still-ambiguous – statement on the constitutional implications of the U.S. imperial turn of 1898-1899. In Part III, Degetau returns to center stage for his inaugural term (1901-1902) as his island’s first elected representative in Washington as Resident Commissioner. As such, he sought to win acceptance for his ideas among U.S. administrative officials, among others. Degetau turned to courts in 1902-1905, Part IV relates, launching efforts that notably included the 1904 Supreme Court case of Gonzales v. Williams. Part V surveys the largely nonjudicial fights over Puerto Rican status in the years after Degetau’s term ended in 1905, noting how prior judicial decisions shaped those battles, the outcomes of which courts eventually confirmed. The study concludes with observations on relationships between law and U.S. empire; on meanings of the Insular Cases; and on how officials’ shared commitments to law and particular of their

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25 See infra notes 350-365 and accompanying text; compare José Trías Monge, Puerto Rico 53-57 (1997) (noting that the Insular Cases, for instance, lay groundwork for muscular U.S. imperial rule in Puerto Rico) with Burnett, supra note 13, at 838 (noting that for at least one purpose the Insular Cases treated Puerto Rico – as compared to traditional U.S. territories – more like a state of the union), and Sanford Levinson, Why the Canon Should be Expanded to Include the Insular Cases and the Saga of American Expansionism, 17 CONST. COMM. 241, 261 (2000) (noting ways that the Insular Cases created greater potential space – vis-à-vis traditional U.S. territories – for multiculturalism-based innovations).
interactions with each other drove instances of early-20th-century U.S. constitutional change.

I. U.S. RULE IN THE SHADOW OF THE CONSTITUTION, 1898-1900

Degetau’s trajectory to relentless advocate of U.S. citizenship for all Puerto Ricans proceeded in stages. As a young man, he became immersed and prominent in a political movement seeking liberal reforms and autonomy for Puerto Rico. U.S. invasion and annexation of his island then provided him new opportunities to realize these ends. He came to believe that pursuit of U.S. citizenship was the key to doing so. And he persisted in that position even as some U.S. officials and jurists came to quite different conclusions.

Degetau began his life amidst liberalism and bondage. His parents hosted meetings of leading liberals in their home, their western-European and Puerto Rican relatives included abolitionists, and his father died owning a young man named Chalí as a slave.26 As a Puerto Rican native, Degetau was also part of a population that held an intermediate status within imperial Spain. Spain favored its citizens born on the Iberian Peninsula over those of island birth and only sometimes in the years after Degetau’s birth extended Puerto Ricans full constitutional rights and proportionate national-level representation.27 Consonant with his emerging status as a Puerto Rican gentleman, Degetau earned a law degree in continental Spain in 1888, cultivated liberal causes and associates, and joined a liberal-republican Puerto Rican political party – the Partido Autonomista – that sought greater individual civil and political liberties and island autonomy from Spain.28 That party fractured in 1898 over whether to ally with a monarchical Spanish party willing in return to support

26 See ÁNGEL M. MERGAL, FEDERICO DEGETAU 30-34 (1944); Untitled document, May 27, 1864, CIHCAM 6/VII/14. 27 See, e.g., infra notes 165-166; TRIÁS MONGE, supra note 25, at 10. 28 See MERGAL, supra note 26, at 39-46; TRIÁS MONGE, supra note 25, at 11; Copy, Certificate of Federico Degetau upon receiving his law license, Oct. 29, 1888, in A. M. Melgar, Documentación relacionada con la vida y la obra de D. Federico Degetau, 1941, 29, CIHCAM 20/L2. Degetau’s liberal causes and associates included advocating mandatory international arbitration and discussing death-penalty abolition with Victor Hugo. See Delegate from Porto Rico, TIMES, Worthington, Ind., [Dec. 1900?], available at CIHCAM 22/L1; see also Certification of membership in El Porvenir, Jan. 20, 1882, CIHCAM 6/VII/16; MERGAL, supra note 26, at 43-46.
Puerto Rican autonomy. As former co-partisans – including a rising star in the party named Luis Muñoz Rivera – embraced the alliance, Degetau split off to form a competing political organization. In the elections that followed in early 1898, Degetau’s new opponents won handily, installing Muñoz Rivera at the head of the cabinet-like island Council of Secretaries. U.S. troops arrived on July 25, 1898.

The looming U.S. annexation brought Puerto Rico into a United States riven by race and just coming to self-identify as imperial. While this study does not seek to define empire or race, relying instead on historical actors’ unstated intuitions and conventional language, some preliminary observations will illuminate the questions that the paper does tackle. Despite differences over what

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31 BAYRON TORO, supra note 30, at 107-08 & n.153; Geo W. Davis, Report of Brig. Gen. Geo. W. Davis, U.S.V., on Civil Affairs of Puerto Rico. 1899, in 1 ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1899, at 477, 486 (1899); Apertura de las camaras, EL LIBERAL, July 18, 1898. The election resulted when, following the schism between Muñoz Rivera’s faction and that of Degetau, Muñoz Rivera’s allies in Spain came to power and extended Puerto Rico relatively broad autonomy. After having secured those gains, Muñoz Rivera and his allies were able to win a resounding victory in 1898 over Degetau’s faction, which secured just 20% of the vote. See, e.g., Erman, supra note 15, at 21-22, 49-50.
32 On racial views of U.S. administrators and politicians and their relationships to the policies that they adopted, see, for example, Cabranes, supra note 13 (discussing Puerto Rico); Lanny Thompson, The Imperial Republic: A Comparison of the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898, 71 PAC. HIST. REV. 535 (2002); PAUL A. KRAMER, THE BLOOD OF GOVERNMENT (2006) (Philippines); LOUIS A. PÉREZ, JR., CUBA BETWEEN EMPIRES, 1878-1901 (1983); PRUCHA, supra note 7 (American Indians). On similar dynamics involving Supreme Court justices and their decisions concerning U.S. imperial holdings, see, for example, MARK S. WEINER, AMERICANS WITHOUT LAW 51-80 (2008); Erman, supra note 15, at 99-100; Juan F. Perea, Fulfilling Manifest Destiny: Conquest, Race, and the Insular Cases, in FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra, at 140; infra note 111 and accompanying text. See also Rogers M. Smith, The Bitter Roots of Puerto Rican Citizenship, in FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra, at 376-79 (observing the role of racial thinking in legal debates over empire); PAUL T. MCCARTNEY, POWER AND PROGRESS (2006) (tackling relationships of social Darwinism, race, religion, constitutionalism, and empire).
33 These matters merit and have received much fuller treatment in work that makes them its focus. See, e.g., Sam Erman, Meanings of Citizenship in the U.S. Empire: Puerto Rico, Isabel Gonzalez, and the Supreme Court, 1885 to 1905, 27 J. AM. ETHNIC HIST. 5 (2008) [hereinafter, Erman, Meanings of Citizenship] (focusing, inter alia, both on contemporary views of Puerto Rican racial character race that differed from those that Degetau advanced and on the elisions
empire meant and whether it was desirable, a broad consensus existed in the turn-of-the-last-century United States that the most recent U.S. annexations were imperial in nature and — in purported contrast to prior U.S. acquisitions — newly so. U.S. racial schemas and manipulations that Degetau deployed in portraying leading Puerto Rican men as white; Erman, supra note 15 (similar); Sam Erman, Reconstruction and Empire (Feb. 16, 2012) (unpublished manuscript, on file with author) [hereinafter Erman, Reconstruction and Empire] (similar). For a sample of scholarship making progress on interrelationships between race, legal-policy, and empire, see Thompson, supra note 32 (examining how perceived racial differences among colonized U.S. peoples resulted in differential official treatment); KRAMER, supra note 32 (investigating the relationship between U.S. racial thinking and U.S. policy in the Philippines); Mark S. Weiner, Teutonic Constitutionalism: The Role of Ethno-Juridical Discourse in the Spanish-American War, in FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra note 13, at 48 (describing recourse to concepts of Anglo-Saxon superiority in congressional and Supreme Court decision-making).

A century after the U.S. imperial turn, scholars have taken a similar turn toward empire. For an early example, see AMY KAPLAN, THE ANARCHY OF EMPIRE IN THE MAKING OF U.S. CULTURE (2003). No such turn was required for scholars already working on U.S. territories acquired by the United States in 1898, see, e.g., FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra note 13; TRÍAS MONGE, supra note 25, which included work on links between, race, empire, and law, see, e.g., José A. Cabranes, Puerto Rico: Colonialism as Constitutional Doctrine, 100 HARV. L. REV. 450, 455-58 (1986) (reviewing TORRUÉLLA, supra note 13). On prior U.S. expansion, conquest, and territorial governance, see, for example, JACK ERICSON EIBLEN, THE FIRST AND SECOND UNITED STATES EMPIRES (1968); Sarah H. Cleveland, Powers Inherent in Sovereignty: Indians, Aliens, Territories, and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of Plenary Power over Foreign Relations, 81 TEXAS L. REV. 1 (2002). On 1897-1899 as an imperial turn, see, for example, Adlai E. Stevenson et al., Bryan or McKinley? The Present Duty of American Citizens 171 N. AM. REV. 433 (1900) (arguing from an anti-imperialist/Democratic perspective that then-contemporary imperialism was altogether new to the United States); Walter Lafeber, The “Lion in the Path”: The U.S. Emergence as a World Power, 101 POL. SCI. Q. 705, 705 (1986); SPARROW, supra note 13, at 3-9, 40; JUAN R. TORRUÉLLA, GLOBAL INTRIGUES (2007) [hereinafter TORRUÉLLA, GLOBAL INTRIGUES].

Among mainlanders’ reasons for holding this view were several perceived distinctions between the expansions of 1898-1899 and those that had preceded them: The most recent expansions caused other empires to treat the United States as a peer. In governing the new U.S. lands, U.S. officials explicitly looked to other empires’ practices — as models and negative examples. See, e.g., Cabán, supra note 13, at 2, 58 (U.S. borrowing from other empires); PHILIP C. JESSUP, ELIHU ROOT 345 (1938) (attempts to construct a distinctly U.S. empire); TORRUÉLLA, GLOBAL INTRIGUES, supra note 34 (U.S. emergence as an imperial power). The new possessions were not contiguous with the United States or reachable from it by land; many lay quite far from the mainland. See, e.g., Brief for the United States at 37, 58, Gonzales v. Williams, 192 U.S. 1 (No 225). A temporal break of three decades separated 1898-1899 from the last major U.S. territorial expansion. See Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33 (discussing implications of this pause in U.S. expansion). The recently annexed people formed large, dense, and racially suspect populations. See, e.g., Frederic R. Coudert, Jr., Our New Peoples: Citizens, Subjects, Nationals or Aliens, 3 COLUM. L. REV. 13 (1903). And it was not clear that the newly U.S. lands would become states or that the newly U.S. people would become U.S. citizens. See, e.g., SPARROW supra note 13, at 5, 42-53 (summarizing contemporary legal-academic debates).
also differed from those in Puerto Rico and other new U.S. possessions. In pre-annexation Puerto Rico, for instance, men recognized as of European descent like Degetau had occupied top rungs in the social order. Afterward, mainland U.S. public opinion often deprecated all Puerto Ricans as racially mixed regardless of the self-proclaimed status of many political leaders there as “sons of Spain.”

To the extent that the U.S. public accepted leading Puerto Rican men’s presentations of themselves as essentially Spanish, it still often perceived them as a darker shade of pale than its increasingly Anglo-Saxon measure of whiteness.

As Degetau quickly perceived, the U.S. invasion also hit politics on the island like a hurricane, variously washing away, leaving unscathed, and wholly upending aspects of the landscape. Concern with Spanish policies had disappeared. Muñoz Rivera’s and Degetau’s competing political alliances emerged largely intact. And

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36 EILEEN J. SUÁREZ FINDLAY, IMPOSING DECENCY 57 (1999); see also MATTHEW FRYE JACOBSON, BARBARIAN VIRTUES (2000). Other Puerto Ricans – including some early political leaders – at times rejected their colleagues’ claims to whiteness. Aware that Muñoz Rivera was closely associated with the “sons of Spain” formulation, for instance, Republicano leader of color José Celso Barbosa, discussed infra at note 44 and in accompanying text, sought electoral advantage following the end of Spanish rule by criticizing Muñoz Rivera and his partisans as being for los blancos (the whites) and los españoles (the Spaniards). Miriam Jiménez Román, Un hombre (negro) del pueblo: José Barbosa and the Puerto Rican ’Race’ Toward Whiteness, 8 CENTRO 8, 17 (1996). Here, Barbosa contemplated islanders of color playing central roles in the leadership and electorate of Puerto Rico. Though Degetau and Barbosa were members of the same island political party, Degetau more steadfastly portrayed Puerto Rican leaders as essentially white.

37 On the concept of the “Anglo-Saxon” and its relationship to scientific racism and U.S. white mainstream thought on American Indians and Filipinos, see, e.g., Weiner, supra note 33. On perceived racial differences among those of European descent, see MATTHEW FRYE JACOBSON, WHITENESS OF A DIFFERENT COLOR (1998). For overviews of the triumph among mainstream whites of a white-supremacist ideology that embraced a tragic legend of Reconstruction and of related processes of black disfranchisement and imposition of Jim Crow regimes, see, for example, DAVID W. BLIGHT, RACE AND REUNION (2001); MARK ELLIOTT, COLOR-BLIND JUSTICE 248 (2006); REBECCA J. SCOTT, DEGREES OF FREEDOM 87, 195-97, 200, 259 (2005); C. VANN WOODWARD, ORIGINS OF THE NEW SOUTH, 1877-1913, at 322 (rev. ed. 1999); Rebecca J. Scott, Public Rights, Social Equality, and the Conceptual Roots of the Plessy Challenge, 106 MICH. L. REV. 777 (2008); Richard H. Pildes, Democracy, Anti-Democracy, and the Canon, 17 CONST. COMM. 295, 301-02 & n.29 (2000); BRANDWEIN, supra note 3, at 7, 10, 182-86.

38 Title unknown, LA NUEVA ERA, Nov. 22, 1898, available at CIHCAM 12/L2; Title and newspaper unknown, Nov. 22, 1898, available at CIHCAM 12/L2.

39 Degetau, consequently, remained associated with the political party that had decisively lost the most recent island-wide election.
the United States took center stage as an object of and participant in island debates.

Though U.S. military officials had initially reconstituted the Council of Secretaries, on February 5, 1899, they ordered its heads to report directly to U.S. military governor Guy Henry.\(^{40}\) Muñoz Rivera and his colleagues resigned in protest and unavailingly appealed to Washington.\(^{41}\)

Muñoz’s setbacks facilitated gains by Degetau, who secured a vacancy as one of four top civilian officers on the island.\(^{42}\) When Spain and the United States formalized U.S. annexation of Puerto Rico via the Treaty of Paris, Degetau and his co-partisans reconstituted themselves into a new political party, which they called Republican.\(^ {43}\) Doing so reflected and sought to extend their alignment with mainland Republicans and – as a result of Republicans’ commitment to U.S. retention of Puerto Rico – with an empire-state that many islanders perceived to be a modern, affluent model of democracy. José Celso Barbosa – a prominent man of color in Puerto Rico who had experienced Republican politics in the 1870s while on the mainland – headed the Partido Republicano, which also found in the alliance an opportunity to align with progressive

\(^{40}\) H.R. Doc. No. 60-1484, at 2191-92 (1909).

\(^{41}\) \textit{Id.}; Headquarters, Dep’t of P.R., General Order No. 17, Feb, 10, 1899, \textit{in}, \textit{Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899}, at 576 (1900); Muñoz Rivera en los Estados Unidos, \textit{La Democracia}, May 3, 1899, 2; Cabán, \textit{supra} note 13, at 167.


\(^{43}\) F. Degetau y González, \textit{To the People} ([(1900?)]; Treaty of Peace between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain, Dec. 10, 1898, 30 Stat. 1754; \textit{To the People / Al País}, ((1899?)}, available at CIHCAM 22/L1.
Republicans and against Democratic segregationists.\textsuperscript{44} Muñoz Rivera and his allies soon reorganized themselves into the Partido Federal.\textsuperscript{45}

Throughout 1899, Degetau built on his reputation by mastering English and developing expertise in U.S. law and politics.\textsuperscript{46} As he was well-positioned to see, debates during these months continued to rage in the United States over the fitness of newly acquired peoples like Puerto Ricans – and especially Filipinos\textsuperscript{47} – for self-government and U.S. membership and over constitutional meanings of U.S. empire.\textsuperscript{48} While the McKinley administration moved ahead with imperial governance, self-described anti-imperialists mobilized half a million American “contributors” and powerful spokespeople in opposition to what they perceived to be a policy that violated the Constitution, transgressed U.S. liberal-democratic ideals, and – perhaps most importantly to many – threatened the U.S. racial order.\textsuperscript{49} Their efforts failed to block formal annexation of formerly Spanish lands but did secure a Senate Resolution declaring that the body did “not intend[] to incorporate the inhabitants of the Philippines into citizenship of the United States.”\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{44} See Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33. Although those who favored Republican expansionism often spoke in terms of the white man’s burden, Thomas R. McHale, \textit{American Colonial Policy Towards the Philippines}, 3 J. S.E. ASIAN HIST. 24, 34-35 (1962) (quoting President McKinley), it was anti-imperialists and Democrats who tended to make the harshest comments concerning the racial characters of the newest U.S. peoples, see, e.g., Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra; infra note 184 and accompanying text. For descriptions of Barbosa as a man \textit{de color} (of color), see, for example, \textit{SANTIAGO IGLESIAS PANTÍN, 1 LUCHAS EMANCIPADORAS \(\text{CRÓNICAS DE PUERTO RICO}\) 59 (2d ed. 1958 [1929])}. Barbosa himself used the phrase, describing his as the “party of the men of color.” \textit{FINDLAY}, supra note 36, at 142-43 (quoting, inter alia, the newspapers \textit{La Defensa} and \textit{El Águila}).

\textsuperscript{45} PROGRAM DEL PARTIDO FEDERAL 10 ([1899?]), available at CIHCAM 6/L3.


\textsuperscript{49} BEISNER, supra note 35, at 216, 219-20, 225.

\textsuperscript{50} “McEnery Resolution Adopted,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, Feb. 15, 1899, 2.
Jurists during this period struggled to reconcile the potentially colonial U.S. imperial turn to Reconstruction-era legal developments that many still saw as embodying more egalitarian principles. For nearly three decades following ratification of the Reconstruction Amendments, U.S. territorial expansion had stopped. As a result, the status of newly annexed people under those Reconstruction Amendments remained an open and untested question. It was possible—and controversial—to argue in 1898 that the 14th and 15th Amendments and the Constitution that they modified made all non-tribal U.S. peoples—including those of color—into both U.S. citizens with substantive privileges and immunities and citizens of a state or of a territory on the road to statehood. For their part, Supreme Court justices treated citizenship ambivalently, variously celebrating its significance, reaffirming its broad distribution within the states of the Union, and construing it to provide few judiciable constitutional rights. Against this backdrop, U.S. jurists also

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51 On the relationship between the U.S. imperial turn and legacies of the Civil War, see BLIGHT, supra note 37, at 291, 352-56, 472 n.24; SCOTT, supra note 37, at 154-88; WOODWARD, supra note 37, at 324-25; Levinson, supra note 25, at 257-59; supra note 37.


53 For more on this point, see Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33; see also Lisa Maria Perez, Citizenship Denied: The Insular Cases and the Fourteenth Amendment,” 94 Va. L. Rev. 1029, 1052-56 (2008).

54 This dynamic continued after 1898. See, e.g., Downes, 182 U.S. at 287 (White, J., concurring).


disagreed over legal legacies of the Civil War and their applicability to U.S. empire. Some asserted that following annexation Puerto Ricans would secure U.S. citizenship, eventual statehood, and full constitutional protections all in a bundle. Others claimed that these three legal changes would reach Puerto Ricans not at all.

Federal administrators also variously weighed in on both sides. After extensive first-hand study of conditions in Puerto Rico, Special Commissioner for the United States to Porto Rico Henry Carroll recommended to the president that Puerto Ricans be made U.S. citizens with full constitutional rights and a traditional form of territorial government that would include a fully elected legislative branch. Charles Magoon, the law officer for what came to be the Bureau of Insular Affairs in the War Department – which had jurisdiction over Puerto Rico in the months after U.S. invasion – went further, opining in mid-1899 that annexation had made the territory “a part of the United States, and, as such, subject to the Constitution.”

After becoming Secretary of War in August 1899, the prominent Republican Wall Street lawyer Elihu Root rejected such generous approaches to Puerto Rican status and rights. He insisted that governance – and hence the U.S. imperial experiment – in Puerto Rico “would inevitably fail without a course of tuition [for islanders] under a strong and guiding hand.” Islanders, he proposed, should have no say in who governed them with the possible exception of

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57 See infra note 58. Observing the continuing power of U.S. citizenship as a basis for claiming rights and status, this study also contributes to a new chronology of the legal rollback of Reconstruction. In doing so, it builds on work suggesting that legal fights over legacies of the Civil War – including the ability of former slaves and their descendants to access rights – stretched into the 20th century, at which point they intertwined with fights concerning the constitutionality of empire. On 20th-century legal fights over the legacy of Reconstruction, see BRANDWEIN, supra note 3, at 1-7, 10, 18, 186-93, 238; supra note 51.

58 See, e.g., SPARROW, supra note 13, at 40-55; Cabranes, supra note 34, at 455-58; Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33.

59 HENRY K. CARROLL, REPORT ON THE ISLAND OF PORTO RICO 63 (1899).

60 Judge Magoon’s Memorandum, WASH. POST, Apr. 12, 1900, 4 (quoting Charles E. Magoon’s written May 1899 opinion).


being allowed to elect a lower legislative chamber. In preparing to promote these positions and establish his Department as an authority on colonial governance, Root drafted a long, internal legal memorandum in support.

Magoon then revised his legal opinion, which was soon given wide distribution, in line with Root’s views. Reviewing the treaties and statutes through which the United States had acquired and governed prior acquisitions, Magoon argued that eventual statehood and full constitutional rights for U.S. territories were matters of political grace, not constitutional requirements. Residents of the new acquisitions would be entitled to certain fundamental rights, Magoon conceded, though not jury trials. They also would not be entitled to enter the United States, in Magoon’s view, until the political branches made their places of residence part of the United States.

Turning to U.S. citizenship, Magoon deemed it too substantive to be universal among U.S. peoples. Because it “carries with it great powers, rights, privileges, and immunities,” he wrote, “the Government exercises discretion in bestowing it.” In addition to the citizen, he added, is he “who owes allegiance to our Government.” Such allegiance could be a temporary status, like the “temporary allegiance” owed by “the alien domiciled in the country . . . during such residence.” And it could “be an absolute and permanent

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64 [Root?], supra note 63.
65 Id.; Charles E. Magoon, REPORTS ON THE LAW OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN TERRITORY SUBJECT TO MILITARY OCCUPATION 81-120 (3d ed. 1903); infra notes 112-114 and accompanying text.
66 Magoon, supra note 65, at 81-110.
67 Id., at 110-14.
68 Id., at 120.
69 Id., at 119.
70 Id., at 60-61.
71 Id., at 114-15.
obligation” that falls between citizenship and alienage. Thus, he elaborated:

There are many persons within the jurisdiction of the United States from whom allegiance in some form is due who are not citizens of the United States. Many soldiers in our Army, sailors in our Navy, seamen in our merchant marine, travelers, temporary sojourners, Indians, Chinese, convicted criminals, and, in another and limited sense, minors and women belong to this class.

Because the Treaty of Paris that transferred Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States vested Congress with discretion over the status of the native inhabitants of Puerto Rico, he indicated, Puerto Ricans owed absolute and permanent allegiance without yet being U.S. citizens.

In 1900, the legal-political landscape again shifted, largely in line with Root’s recommendations that Puerto Ricans receive limited rights, status, and self-government. Federal lawmakers enacted the Foraker Act, which in several ways protected nonjudicial federal officials’ discretion in governing Puerto Rico and the ostensibly more racially degraded Philippines. While acknowledging the authority of the Court, lawmakers hoped in the act to create in Puerto Rico a form of government that could both first be challenged in court without risking an adverse ruling directly applicable to the Philippines and – if the court issued a favorable ruling – then be implemented in the Philippines. They invited judicial review by imposing a modest tariff on U.S.-Puerto Rican trade in possible contravention of the constitutional bar on nonuniform tariffs for

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72 Id.
73 Id., at 118.
74 Id., at 118, 120, passim.
75 CABÁN, supra note 13, at 89.
76 Foraker Act, Pub. L. No. 56-191, 31 Stat. 77 (1900); see also infra note 79.
As to whether Puerto Ricans enjoyed other constitutional rights, the law was largely silent. The McKinley Administration had initially sought through its congressional allies to secure U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans, but had dropped the initiative in the face of concerns that doing so might accord Puerto Ricans too many rights or establish a precedent that the Supreme Court would hold applicable to Filipinos. Instead, the Act did not clarify whether Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens – identifying them only as “citizens of Porto Rico” – or whether Puerto Rico would become a state. And though the statute replaced War Department administration of Puerto Rico with a civil government, it extended the island little self-government, creating only an elected lower legislative chamber known as the House of Delegates and a Resident Commissioner to represent islanders in Washington.

Degetau quickly emerged as Republicanos’ candidate for Resident Commissioner in an election campaign in which he shared with Federales a continued adherence to Spanish-era autonomist ideals of liberal republicanism and Puerto Rican self-government. To distinguish himself, Degetau insisted that only he had done the “studies of... American constitutional questions that underlay the issues of status” to “brandish” effectively “juridical meaning[s]” “in defense of the rights our country.”

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78 U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 1; Foraker Act, 31 Stat., at 82-83; 33 CONG. REC. 1946 (praising the Foraker bill for inviting judicial review), cited in Krishanti Vignarajah, The Political Roots of Judicial Legitimacy: Explaining the Enduring Validity of the Insular Cases, 77 UNIV. CHI. L. REV. 781, 822 & n.177 (2010); see also infra note 362.


81 Id.

82 BAYRON TORO, supra note 30, at 115.

83 F. Degetau to Manuel Rossy, Aug. 31, 1900, in Un acuerdo, El Pais, Sep. 20, 1900, available at CIHCAM 12/L2; Need the Best Candidate, SAN JUAN NEWS, Oct. 1, 1900, available at CIHCAM 22/L1, 104; La convención republicana, paper unknown, [early Oct. 1900?], available at CIHCAM 12/L2; see also, e.g., Spain Preferred to Our Neglect, DIARIO DE P.R., Feb. 24, 1900, available at CIHCAM 12/L2.

84 Degetau to corregimiento, Sep. 5, 1900, in Candidatos o candiditos, EL DIARIO, Sep. 11, 1900, available at CIHCAM 22/L2 (“Estudios sobre materia constitucional y determinadamente...”)
vision for Puerto Rico and the United States that was potentially also applicable to other new U.S. acquisitions, including the Philippines:

Unlike in “monarchical and centralized nations” like Spain, where “patriotism . . . involve[d] a tension between love of region and submission to the family or city that personifies or stands in for the entirety of national life,” the U.S. federal government did not dominate its regions. Instead, U.S. “patriotism ha[d] a double concept with profound love of native region acting as a basis and foundation for profound love and respect for the general state.”

The answer to whether “there are in the United States . . . or can be two classes of citizens, two conditions of rights,” was that “basic principles of the Constitution of the United States” guaranteed Puerto Ricans “enjoyment of the American citizenship” and Puerto Rico status as an “organized Territory now, in preparation to become an autonomous state of the union.” Any other result would effectively be saying, “Goodbye Washington, Goodbye Founding Fathers,” because it would mean “that American citizenship had been reduced to the monopoly of 74 million oligarchs.”

U.S. officials also debated and moved to shape the future of U.S. empire in 1900. Those who administered Puerto Rico returned Republicanos’ faith with favoritism. On the mainland, William
Jennings Bryan, who advocated Filipino independence, accepted the Democratic presidential nomination with this anti-imperial jab at the Republican incumbent: the “forcible annexation of territory to be governed by arbitrary power differs as much from the acquisition of territory to be built up into states as a monarchy differs from a democracy. . . . It is now proposed to force upon [annexed] people a government for which there is no warrant in our Constitution . . . ”

As elections neared, Federales criticized U.S. officials’ bias and announced a boycott.92

Two days later, now-unopposed Republicanos swept to power in Puerto Rico.93 Having ridden his attempted synthesis of U.S. and island constitutional ideals to island electoral victory, the new Resident Commissioner now turned to seeking to convince U.S. officials to embrace his vision. Degetau received another boost when his party’s favored presidential candidate, William McKinley, won reelection. For mainland anti-imperialists who recognized that electoral politics were but one relevant lever of state power, McKinley’s victory was an occasion to shift their eyes from the polls to the courts.94 Degetau similarly hurried to the mainland to hear arguments in the series of tariff and fee disputes concerning law and empire that came to be known as the Insular Cases.95

II. AMBIGUOUS DECLARATIONS: THE INSULAR CASES OF 1901

As Degetau settled into Washington in early 1901, the Supreme Court appeared poised to reshape the juridical landscape of U.S.
Two of the pending Insular Cases, DeLima v. Bidwell (1901) and Downes v. Bidwell (1901), respectively turned on whether Puerto Rico was “foreign,” hence subject to pre-1900 tariff laws, or a part of the “United States” within which the Constitution demanded tariff uniformity notwithstanding the ostensibly contrary dictates of the Foraker Act. These questions, in turn, raised that of citizenship. “[I]f the inhabitants of these islands are citizens of the United States,” Frederic Coudert, the prominent international-law lawyer chosen to speak for private litigants in all seven Insular Cases, argued, “it would be admitted that the islands themselves were part of the United States.”

Because other Insular Cases involved issues of Filipino status, the cases also presented the Court an opportunity to treat Puerto Rico and the Philippines differently.

Degetau took a roseate view of his odds. He was optimistic that...
the justices – whom he believed capable of unilaterally and decisively safeguarding Puerto Rican status and rights – would vindicate his constitutional view and his campaign promises to win recognition of it in Washington. But by simultaneously authorizing civil governance in Puerto Rico, generally declining to clarify Puerto Rican rights and status, and imposing a modest tariff on island-mainland trade, the authors of the Foraker Act had reduced the likelihood and potential impact of a ruling against the government in Downes. The tariff provision of the Foraker Act, which did not directly involve the Philippines, U.S. citizenship, or the Bill of Rights, presented a potentially narrow issue. Moreover, civil government under the Act now existed in Puerto Rico and groundwork was being laid for a similar approach in the Philippines. Upholding the law would mean avoiding disruptions to already-underway imperial governance – not just still-theoretical schemes. Even if the Court ruled against the government, there was no guarantee that it would do so on grounds favored by Degetau. Justices could also strike the Foraker Act tariff without seriously constraining the discretion of the political branches to administer the Philippines and determine the status and rights of that and other recently acquired people and places.

In May, the Court issued its decisions, which upheld some but not all of the challenged tariffs. DeLima overturned imposition of pre-1900 tariffs on U.S.-Puerto Rican shipments. Justice Henry Brown wrote for the Court that Puerto Rico “was not a foreign country within the meaning of the tariff laws” enacted prior to 1900. Downes then upheld imposition of an explicit tariff on mainland-island commerce. In addition to announcing that judgment, Brown wrote that Puerto Rico was “not a part of the

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101 See, e.g., Untitled article, [NEWS], Dec. 3, 1900, available at CIHCAM 12/L2; Draft, [Federico Degetau] to Manuel Rossy, Feb. 20, 1902, CIHCAM 2/VII/47. Many scholars now view the early Insular Cases as instances of the kind of rapid, unilateral judicial change to the constitutional order that Degetau envisioned. See, e.g., supra notes 21 and 23, infra notes 350-360, and accompanying text. As we will see, however, the cases are better understood as ambiguous and tentative contributions to a process that spanned decades and involved numerous nonjudicial officials. See, e.g., supra notes 23-25, 96, infra notes 329, 342, 355-365, and accompanying text.

102 Delima, 182 U.S. at 200 (1901).
United States within the revenue clauses of the Constitution,” and so outside their prescription of tariff nondiscrimination “throughout the United States.” According to Brown, Congress had chosen not to treat Puerto Rico as a foreign country before 1900 even though the Constitution would have permitted it to do so.

As Degetau observed, “The decisions . . . produced a perplexity.” They seemingly included Puerto Rico within the nation for one statutory purpose – deeming it non-foreign – but not for a different constitutional one. In Downes, held by contemporary observers and their successors to be the most important Insular Case, no opinion garnered five votes. And in both cases four justices dissented. It clarified matters little that the Court soon declared Downes and Bidwell applicable to the Philippines.

The most notable of the opinions was Justice Edward Douglas White’s Downes concurrence, which proposed a new territorial nonincorporation doctrine. He asserted that Puerto Rico – unlike prior territories – had not been incorporated by statute or treaty into the Union. U.S. citizenship figured prominently in the analysis, with White noting both the frequency with which the federal political branches had expressly extended the status to previously acquired peoples and the absence in the Foraker Act of recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens. He concluded that the Constitution applied differently in Puerto Rico than in prior territories, providing few details beyond generally announcing that Puerto Rico was “foreign to the United States in a domestic sense” while also U.S. land under international law.

As to citizenship, White imagined:

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103 Downes, 182 U.S. at 287; U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 1.
104 [Degetau], supra note 96 (“Las decisiones del Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos . . . han producido una perplejidad”); Charles E. Littlefield, The Insular Cases, 1 S.L. REV. 477, 478 (1901).
105 See, e.g., SPARROW, supra note 13.
108 Id., at 341 (White, J., concurring).
Citizens of the United States discover an unknown island, peopled with an uncivilized race, yet rich in soil.... Can it be denied that such right [to acquire] could not be practically exercised if the result would be to endow the inhabitants with citizenship of the United States . . . .

Presuming U.S. citizenship to be too consequential for some colonized peoples, he concluded that constitutional marriage of annexation to naturalization would leave the United States “helpless in the family of nations.”

Although many classed Puerto Ricans as a relatively civilized people, Justice Brown was more concerned with using his opinion to guard the mainland against purportedly savage Filipinos than with finding ways to distinguish Puerto Ricans. As he later told Coudert, the case had implications for the Philippines, where “he was much preoccupied by the danger of racial and social questions” and so was “quite desirous . . . that Congress should have a very free hand.”

Charles Magoon, the law officer for the Bureau of Insular Affairs within the War Department, saw affirmation in the decision and the events preceding it: In addition to winning the approval of the Secretary of War and high-ranking officials in other departments, his legal analysis had been sanctioned by the political branches through the Foraker Act. The U.S. public had then shown its support by giving Republican proponents electoral victories. Now, the Supreme Court had “sustained” it as well.

Degetau had hoped for a different result — that the Court would hold the Uniformity Clause applicable to Puerto Rico, thereby prohibiting any tariff on mainland-island trade — and he disagreed with Justice White concerning citizenship. Nonetheless, he interpreted the outcomes as consistent with his campaign to win
official recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S.-citizen residents of a U.S. territory. The day after the decision issued, Degetau met Justice Brown, tested his new ideas before him, and reported himself “very much pleased with the” decisions. The position that the justices occupied, he told his island audience, had allowed them to issue a “high and serene solution” to the politically contentious cases. Stressing the justices’ “practical unanimity that Porto Rico is ‘a territory of the United States,’” he contended that detached observation revealed that Puerto Rico was no more “a ‘possession’ or . . . ‘colony’” under the cases than was “Arizona.”

The truth lay between Magoon’s and Degetau’s positions. Magoon was right that his legal analysis for the War Department had found support with administrators and elected officials and to lesser degrees with the public and justices. But the Court had not declared Magoon’s views to be binding doctrine. And while the Court had not foreclosed Degetau’s arguments, few agreed that the cases guaranteed Puerto Rico the same status as Arizona. Rather, the cases raised without ruling upon the possibility of unincorporated U.S. territory, territory that was neither foreign nor domestic. That ambiguous legal innovation left open many questions about the relationship of Constitution to empire. As U.S. governance of new imperial acquisitions continued to reshape the official landscape, nonjudicial officials and those who brought claims before them would discover opportunities to help provide answers.

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115 As Degetau Sees It, BALTIMORE SUN, May 28, 1901, available at CIHCAM 18/L1; Draft, [Federico Degetau] to Besosa, May 31, 1901, CIHCAM 3/L/43.
116 [Degetau], supra note 96 ("alta y serena solución").
117 Porto Rico, Territory, BUFFALO COURIER, July 31, 1901, available at CIHCAM 18/L1; [Degetau,] supra note 116 ("una <posesión> ó . . . una <colonia>"; “Arizona”).
118 Although these cases have been of great interest to scholars of relations of politics to law, a comprehensive account of their role in dynamics throughout the U.S. state remains elusive. Krishanti Vignarajah takes important preliminary steps. On her telling, after the national political branches failed to resolve debates over U.S. imperialism through normal political challenges, they invited the Court to adjudicate the dispute, which the Court resolved in the Insular Cases of 1901. Supra note 78. While she likely overstates both political irresolution of questions of empire, see L. David Roper, Composition of Congress since 1867, http://arts.bev.net/roperldavid/politics/congress.htm (last visited Feb. 15, 2012) and National Archives and Records Administration, Historical Election Results: 1789-2004 Presidential Elections, http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/votes/index.html
III. Degetau Seeks Citizenship Without Filing Suit, 1901-1902

Degetau spent the balance of his first term seeking U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans as a purported proof and consequence of their meriting full belonging in the U.S. nation. He worked to build relationships with mainland audiences and exemplified before them the readiness for integration into U.S. life that he attributed to Puerto Ricans. He quickly won a reputation as a “highly ... diplomatic man” of “brilliant attainments” who “created a favorable impression in the public life of Washington.” And soon he was making near-daily visits to the Capitol, attending meetings with executive and judicial officials, and gaining entry to newspapers and academic gatherings.

Access and regard did not translate into results, however. “[C]ongressmen don’t plan to turn to Puerto Rican matters,” he discovered, because the Supreme Court still might offer further – potentially constraining – guidance. As Henry Cooper, the lawyer-
Chairman of the House Committee on Insular Affairs and Degetau’s friend, told him, many Congressmen also believed that “Puerto Rico can’t be considered in itself” because the “Philippines also has to be taken into account.”

Courts, which moved slowly and only in properly presented cases, also promised no immediate relief. Racial bias further impeded Degetau’s campaign. Once on the mainland, Degetau saw that public opinion often ignored the accomplishments of leading Puerto Ricans and cast typical islanders as a racially inferior, dependent people akin to Filipinos and of African, native, and southern-European heritages. This, he told allies, “made our political labor here hard.”

Degetau responded by turning to available levers of power. In settling so little about the relationship of Constitution to empire, the Insular Cases had opened spaces for institutions other than courts to maneuver. As he placed claims to U.S. citizenship before officials from across the federal government, Degetau perceived the potential role of administrators in establishing constitutional meaning and especially targeted them. Degetau also chose this route because as a member of a professional class, a representative of workers facing a dearth of jobs, and an official elected by the patronage-based

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124 Porto Rican’s Ambition, WASH. TIMES, July 10, 1901, available at 18/L1; [Federico Degetau], Diary, Dec. 10, 1901, CIHCAM 11/L4.

125 Federico Degetau to Manuel Rossy, Jan. 4, 1901, CIHCAM 2/VI/2; Federico Degetau to Manuel Rossy et al., Dec. 8, 1900, CIHCAM 2/V/12.

126 On institution-level differences in approaches to law, see, for example, Graber, supra note 96, at 35; WHITTINGTON, supra note 15, at 14-18, 22-23, 52, 287; Joondeph, supra note 7; Keck, supra note 7, at 532; Milligan, supra note 16, at 245-48, 273 (collecting sources).

127 Long before the New Deal, it is now clear, federal administration played numerous and powerful roles in the United States, including undertaking mass adjudications and developing extensive internal administrative law to guide their resolution. See Mashaw, supra note 7; see also, e.g., Andrew J. Polsky & William D. Adler, The State in a Blue Uniform, 40 POLITY 348 (2008); cf. Novak, supra note 15; DANIEL P. CARPENTER, THE FORGING OF BUREAUCRATIC AUTONOMY (2001) (tracing the rise of certain federal agencies during the Gilded Age). For critical reviews of perceptions of federal administration as weak and lawless, see, for example, Desmond King & Robert C. Liebman, Finding the American State: Transcending the “Statelessness” Account, 40 POLITY 368, 370 (2008); Mashaw, supra, at 1362, passim; cf. Schiller, supra note 18 (describing administrative responsibility for speech regulation in the first half of the 20th century).
political system in Puerto Rico, his primary concerns included equality of access to employment and professional opportunities for Puerto Ricans. On these issues, administrative authorities figured prominently, often acting as initial – and sometimes as final – rule-bound decision-makers. It was their commitment to deciding live controversies properly presented that created the opportunities that Degetau took up to seek clarification of islanders’ constitutional status.

To bolster his efforts, Degetau crafted arguments for U.S. officials and the broader U.S. public. In them, he insisted that Puerto Ricans merited full membership within the Union because their leading men shared with their mainland counterparts European heritages, markers of civilization, and longstanding, effective commitments to liberal-democratic ideals.

Degetau thus met the new circumstances that accompanied U.S. rule by seeking U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans based on the common struggles of leading – implicitly white – men in both locales for liberal-republican ideals like individual rights, democracy, and emancipation. Instead of attacking racial hierarchy, he moved to secure Puerto Ricans what he perceived to be their rightful place in it. Mixing arguments favoring U.S. citizenship specifically for Puerto Ricans and more generally for all U.S. people, he proposed to solve

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128 Although not the focus of this paper, the outsized role that federal administrators played in Puerto Rican governance suggests that U.S. imperialism provided administrators opportunities to increase the bureaucratic capacity of their organizations. See, e.g., CARPENTER, supra note 127 (describing how bureaus and divisions could accrue power through developing unique expertise that networks to which they turned valued); THEDA SKOCPOL, PROTECTING SOLDIERS AND MOTHERS (1992) (describing how new policies can transform capacities of certain institutions within the state which, in turn, play roles in establishing policy); CABAN, supra note 13, at 2, 8, 16, 43, 45, 49, 118-19, 174-75, 189 (focusing on growth of U.S. colonial government). On administrative law, see, for example, Mashaw, supra note 7.

129 See Lee, supra note 10, at 806 nn.14-16 (collecting sources describing how agencies often work on matters of potential constitutional moment and how they and reviewing courts should proceed in such cases).

130 On lawyers and the bar as a potentially powerful institution within the U.S. state, especially in relations with courts, see John D. Skrentny, Law and the American State, 32 ANN. REV. OF SOC. 213, 231 (2006); Whittington, supra note 7, at 618; PAUL FRYMER, BLACK AND BLUE (2007); Witt, supra note 15, at 769-70 (noting that four of the most important secretaries of war were lawyers); Novak, supra note 15, at 767; Daniel R. Ernst, The Politics of Administrative Law: New York’s Anti-Bureaucracy Clause and the O’Brien-Wagner Campaign of 1938, 27 LAW & HIST. REV. 331 (2009); Daniel R. Ernst, Morgan and the New Dealers, 20 J. POL’Y HIST. 447 (2008).
nested puzzles concerning island and mainland constitutionalism. The U.S. Constitution, he told island voters and U.S. officials, both secured Puerto Ricans the liberation they had long sought and accounted for U.S. empire by making islanders U.S. citizens of a traditional U.S. territory destined for statehood and concomitant self-government. The promise of this strategy marked out its perils. U.S. officials would either both embrace Degetau’s robust constitutional vision and accept Puerto Rican political leaders as racial peers or reject a crucial premise of Degetau’s argument.\(^{131}\)

Degetau soon discovered that federal administrators often moved tentatively, sidestepping definitive resolution of constitutional questions involving status and empire where possible. He, in turn, sought individual island claimants whose disputes could only be resolved through clarification of their status or that of their homeland.\(^{132}\) Each time an administrative body treated Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens or Puerto Rico as a traditional U.S. territory, he knew, it created a potentially persuasive precedent and neutralized arguments that the statuses that Degetau sought were incompatible with imperial governance.\(^{133}\)

Degetau launched one claim by drawing on his recent acquaintance with legally trained Acting Secretary of State David Hill to suggest in January 1901 that Hill could prevent “trouble for the agents of the Government, and for Porto Ricans” by stating when “Puerto Ricans are to be considered as aliens, according to the immigration law, and when they are to be allowed to land as citizens of the United States.”\(^{134}\) Beginning in 1900, Hawai’ian sugar planters

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\(^{131}\) On certain other island leaders’ attempts to navigate the crosscurrents of U.S. liberal-democratic ideals and of white mainstream thought concerning race on the mainland, see Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33.

\(^{132}\) Cf. Mashaw, supra note 7 (arguing that administrators were, by this period, already engaging in mass adjudications according to administrative law that they helped to create).

\(^{133}\) Cf. Jerry L. Mashaw, Between Facts and Norms: Agency Statutory Interpretation as an Autonomous Enterprise, 55 Univ. Toronto L.J. 497, 515-16 (2005) (observing that agencies more than courts are the institutions to push constitutional limits and be able to shape constitutional settlements by lobbying, testing waters, negotiating, and reaching accommodations).

facing tightening labor supply due to Chinese Exclusion had begun to recruit and bring to their plantations – via New Orleans – more than 5,000 financially distressed Puerto Rican laborers. While these migrants faced no immigration inspections, Degetau told Hill, on November 24, 1900, “Mr. Alfonso Gómez y Stanley, a professor who had acted as U. S. Interpreter at the Paris Exposition, . . . was [temporarily] detained at Ellis Island, N. Y., when it was known that he was a Porto Rican, and that he had no money.” Hill’s response was encouraging: “the error of holding [Gómez], even temporarily, evidently arose from the lack of knowledge of some [immigration] officer as to the status of Porto Ricans.” Degetau then sought further clarification, observing how “[c]oncerning the Administration’s opinion of the status of Porto Ricans nothing was said.” But with no pending claim hinging on the answer, which had the potential to limit federal control over migration from newly U.S. lands to the states of the Union, the State Department silently declined the invitation.

Degetau also launched a claim with Hill based on newspaper reports of official restrictions on the freedom of movement of other Puerto Ricans en route to Hawai’ian plantations. In Texas, he told Hill, islanders had been “arrested as violators,” ostensibly, “of the criminal law.” Later, police had restored and maintained order on a steamship in Honolulu Harbor that was transporting migrants to their work sites. Apparently believing that federal law barred police from arresting or subduing U.S. citizens for declining to travel to engage in contracted-for labor, Degetau told the island press that the charges suggested that “Puerto Ricans lacked all political protections, and did not know what type of citizens they were.” Hill ordered an investigation, which Hawai’ian officials and planters

135 For sources, see Erman, supra note 15, at 89 n.103.
136 [Degetau] to Secretary of State, supra note 134.
137 David Hill to Federico Degetau, Feb. 16, 1901, CIHCAM 2/VII/4.
139 Draft, [Federico Degetau] to Secretary of State, Jan. [30,], 1901, CIHCAM 2/VI/19.
140 Id.
141 Las gestiones de Degetau, supra note 134 (“los puertorriqueños carecían de toda protección política, y no se sabía siquiera qué clase de ciudadanos eran”).
– who hoped to continue recruiting Puerto Rican laborers – used to exculpate themselves and laud migration.\textsuperscript{142} Migrants, their report trumpeted, were “all satisfied with the treatment they received in transit.”\textsuperscript{143} Had Degetau wanted to question the report, he could have noted that all statements in it were made by or before planters and their allies.\textsuperscript{144} But Degetau was no radical on labor questions. He ultimately wished to be treated as the equivalent of Hawai’ian officials – as a white U.S. leader of a U.S. territory – and not to have his fate determined by association with Puerto Rican workers. With no further progress on issues of status immediately possible, Degetau celebrated that the charges “were not true.”\textsuperscript{145}

He next tried to win recognition of his and by extension all Puerto Ricans’ U.S. citizenship by gaining admission to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar. He applied, well aware that “the court permits only citizens of the United States before it.”\textsuperscript{146} The Court, acting summarily, admitted him.\textsuperscript{147} Interpreting this victory broadly, he announced, “My admission . . . fixed my personal Status and that of my constituents as American citizens.”\textsuperscript{148} Sympathetic island newspaper articles added that now “The Great National Constitution Covers Puerto Rico,” which had come to hold the same status as “other territories like Arizona.”\textsuperscript{149} Many mainland newspapers and lawyers also saw Degetau’s admission as a positive signal from the Court concerning the place of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. legal order.\textsuperscript{150}

The following month, Degetau published in the \textit{Philadelphia Record} a defense of Puerto Rican civilization and capacity that he

\textsuperscript{142} Id.; [Degetau] to Secretary of State, supra note 139; David Hill to Federico Degetau, Feb. 16, 1901, CIHCAM 2/VII/40.

\textsuperscript{143} F. A. Schaefer to Sanford Dole, Mar. 6, 1901, CIHCAM 2/IX/3.

\textsuperscript{144} See CICHAM 2/IX.

\textsuperscript{145} [Federico Degetau] to Secretary of State, Apr. 15, 1901, CIHCAM 2/IX/13.

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Admission of Mr. Degetau}, WASH. POST, May 1, 1901, available at CIHCAM 12/L2; \textit{Grata noticia}, El PAIS, Apr. 30, 1901, available at CIHCAM 12/L2.

\textsuperscript{147} See supra note 146.


\textsuperscript{150} See, e.g., \textit{Constitution Follows the Flag}, MINN. TRIBUNE, May 1, 1901, available at CIHCAM 12/L2.
then circulated to a variety of U.S. officials. There and elsewhere he portrayed the island political class to mainlanders as committed, effective advocates for liberties and as experienced in self-government. Drawing on Spanish-era battles over both territorial status within the Spanish empire and the political status of Puerto Rico-born Spaniards, Degetau provided this stylized account of past events:

In classical times Latin ancestors of Puerto Ricans formulated principles upon which U.S.-citizens-to-be then drew in formulating their Constitution. Spain joined the circum-Atlantic struggle for liberty soon afterward with its “noble and glorious” 1812 Constitution that Puerto Ricans played a key role in creating. Islanders’ subsequent struggles helped create a Puerto Rico that was “a province of Spain equal to the other provinces,” enjoyed more autonomy than U.S. states, sent representatives and senators to the Spanish Cortes, had “practically . . . universal” male suffrage, and housed a population included in the Spanish Constitution with an identical juridical status to that of other Spaniards. In 1873, island liberals’ efforts ended slavery in Puerto Rico.

At the same time, he sought to distance Puerto Ricans from blacks, American Indians, and indigenous Pacific islanders – in part by reinforcing the unenviable stations of those groups in U.S. racial hierarchies. In an account of slavery that rendered invisible the experiences of island slaves, Degetau insisted that “the whites were more enslaved by our monstrous crime than our legal victims.”

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151 See, e.g., Theodore Roosevelt to Federico Degetau, June 24 1901, CIHCAM 3/II/22; Henry Cooper to Federico Degetau, July 8, 1901, CIHCAM 3/II/33; Degetau, supra note 121.

152 For less heroic accounts of historical Puerto Rican status and rights, see, for example, JOSÉ TRIÁS MONGE, HISTORIA CONSTITUCIONAL DE PUERTO RICO (1980); FRANCISCO A. SCARANO, PUERTO RICO (1993).

153 American Life Split into Parts, supra note 95.

154 Degetau, supra note 121.

155 Jacob H. Hollander et al., Discussion, in 3 PUBLICATIONS AM. ECON. ASS’N (3d ser.) 342, 347-50 (1902); Degetau, supra note 121; La American Economic Association y el Comisionado Señor Degetau, LA CORRESPONDENCIA, Jan. 22, 1902, available at CIHCAM 18/L1; FEDERICO DEGETAU, THE POLITICAL STATUS OF PORTO RICO 14 (1902).

156 [Degetau], supra note 121; LUIS A. FIGUEROA, SLAVERY, & FREEDOM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PUERTO RICO 79 (2005).

157 [Federico Degetau], Something that the American People Must Know about Porto Rico, no date, CIHCAM 7/I/2. Two drafts of this chapter have been preserved. I draw from both. On the instrumentalism of Degetau’s treatment of slavery, see Erman, Reconstruction and Empire, supra note 33 (“By contrasting ‘our’ to slaves, Degetau associated Puerto Ricans with
Mainlanders, he elsewhere asserted at others’ expense, were wrong to have the “idea that Porto Rico . . . was peopled by” “some race of semi-savage ‘Indians.’” He also purported to distinguish Puerto Ricans from residents of Guam, whom he deprecated as ostensibly existing on “the boundaries of a savage condition.” Reinforcing the claim, he insisted that such differences had led Spain to establish a more liberal government in Puerto Rico than on the bulk of its Pacific islands.

Hoping to build on his Supreme Court bar admission and recent public relations efforts to win express official confirmation that Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens or that Puerto Rico was a traditional U.S. territory, Degetau turned in the latter half of 1901 to claims concerning passports and civil-service quotas. He first protested the State Department’s “issu[ing] of a passport to me, in which my American citizenship has been omitted.” Because federal law prescribed that “[n]o passport shall be granted or issued to or verified for any other persons than citizens of the United States,” Degetau expected a response expressly addressing islanders’ citizenship status. When the State Department instead failed to respond, Degetau prepared to file suit. But that effort stalled after Degetau learned that federal courts were unlikely to intervene in a case that involved what Degetau’s lawyer termed “ordinary official duties[,] even when those duties require an interpretation of the law.”

In the interim, Degetau integrated his pursuit of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans with a lobbying effort designed to win Puerto Rico

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158 DEGETAU, supra note 155, at 7.
159 [Federico Degetau], Drafts, The Truth about Porto Rico and Puerto-Rico and Its People, no date, CIHCAM 18/L2.
full access to the civil-service system, which had quotas requiring it to hire minimum numbers of residents from most states and territories but not from Puerto Rico. In addition to marking their island as potentially inferior to traditional U.S. territories, the resultant near-total exclusion of Puerto Ricans from the civil service was bad politics for Republicanos. It reenacted the prior Spanish practice – long opposed by island liberals – of hiring preferences for those born on the continent over the island born. The discrimination mattered all the more because the Puerto Rican political system, like that in the United States, depended heavily on patronage.

In November 1901, Degetau again met with Supreme Court Justice Henry Brown, now for a “conversation concerning the citizenship of Puerto Rico.” When Brown asked “if Puerto Ricans would like to return to Spain,” Degetau told him that “the Puerto Ricans are and desire to be American, although they believe that they have not been done justice, they still have faith.” A meeting around the same time with President Theodore Roosevelt “to speak of the Civil Service Law and citizenship” culminated in that former Columbia Law School student requesting a written statement. After a discussion with a “Com[missioner] of the Civil Service,” Degetau reported that “Puerto Ricans get a quota.”

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164 See Erman, supra note 15, at 105 n.125 (providing sources).
166 See, e.g., scOTT C. JaMES, PaTrOnaGe ReGimEs aNd AmErIcAn PaRty DeVeloPmEnT from “The Age of Jackson” to the Progressive Era, 36 BRIT. J. POL. SCI. 39 (2005); Cablegram, Colton to Edwards, Mar. 1, 1910, MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-49; Colton to Edwards, Mar. 2, 1910, MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-57; supra note 165.
167 [Federico Degetau], Diary, Nov. 18, 1901, CIHCAM 11/L4 (“conversación acerca de la ciudadanía de Puerto Rico”).
168 Id. (“si los puertorriqueños [sic] querían [sic] volver á España”; “Los puertoriqueños [sic] son y desean ser americanos, aunque creen que no se les ha hecho justicia, pero confían”).
169 Id. (“para hablarle de la ley del Civil Service y de la ciudadanía”); H.W. BRANDS, T.R. 110 (1998). Roosevelt had ascended to the presidency in the wake of President McKinley’s assassination several weeks prior. Mr. Roosevelt Is Now the President, N. Y. TIMES, Sep. 15, 1901, 1.
170 [Federico Degetau], Diary, Nov. 18, 1901, CIHCAM 11/L4 (“Comr del Civil Service”; “Conseguida quota los puertoriqueños [sic]”). Two of the three Civil Service Commissioners were lawyers. See EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION 23
Degetau had a “Conference with the” legally trained “Sec of State concerning the citizenship” of Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{171}

Degetau next laid out for Roosevelt in the missive that the President had requested legal arguments that favored recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens without necessarily requiring similar treatment of Filipinos.\textsuperscript{172} Implicitly equating nationality and citizenship, he wrote that the Treaty of Paris recognized some Puerto Ricans “as having accepted the nationality of the territory in which they resided”; that Puerto Rico, under the \textit{Insular Cases}, was “a territory of the United States”; and that recent legislation lumping together “\textit{all inhabitants}” of the island had made U.S. citizens of the balance of Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{173} He reached the same result by noting legislation constituting mainlanders and Puerto Ricans residing on the island into “the people of Porto Rico” and by presuming that such a “political body cannot be constituted with American citizens and other members of distinct nationality or distinct citizenship.”\textsuperscript{174} He then reminded Roosevelt that Puerto Ricans’ embrace of U.S. troops had partly followed General Guy Henry’s 1898 promise to islanders of “protection as citizens of the American Union.”\textsuperscript{175} “The only constitutional and just interpretation,” he concluded, is that all “citizens of Puerto Rico” are “American citizens.”\textsuperscript{176}

In late 1901 and early 1902, Roosevelt and U.S. officials chose to avoid, not answer, Degetau’s claims. After extending to Puerto


\textsuperscript{172} \textsc{Federico Degetau Gonzalez}, newspaper unknown, no date, available at CIHCAM 18/L1/195 (quoting [Federico Degetau] to [Theodore Roosevelt], Dec. 7, 1901). In 1902, Degetau’s first two arguments would become potentially applicable to the Philippines following enactment of the Philippine Bill of 1902, Pub. L. No. 235, 32 Stat. 691 (1902), which used similar language to that used in the Foraker Act.

\textsuperscript{173} \textsc{Federico Degetau Gonzalez}, supra note 172 (“habían aceptado la nacionalidad del territorio en que residían”; “un territorio de los Estados Unidos”; “todos los habitantes”).

\textsuperscript{174} Id. (“el pueblo de Puerto Rico”; “una entidad o cuerpo político no puede constituirse con ciudadanos americanos y otros miembros de distinta nacionalidad o distinta ciudadanía”).

\textsuperscript{175} Id. (“protección como ciudadanos de la Unión Americana”).

\textsuperscript{176} Id. (“La única interpretación constitucional y justa de la ley es . . . que las palabras \textit{ciudadanos de Puerto Rico} es una designación de ciudadanía americana.”).
Ricans abroad “the same protection of person and property as is accorded to the native-born citizens of the United States,” the Secretary of State – with Roosevelt’s support – sought and won legislation letting the State Department grant passports to U.S. insular residents regardless of U.S. citizenship. Rather than recognize islanders as U.S. citizens – and commit themselves to providing whatever rights followed – the Secretary and President sidestepped the question of U.S. citizenship by parceling out to Puerto Ricans individual incidents of the status.

Similar mixes of evasion and half-measures met Degetau’s next pair of claims. In one, Degetau set out to manufacture a test case by importing paintings by a Puerto Rican artist and claiming a duty exemption for “[w]orks of art, the production of American artists residing temporarily abroad.” On May 13, 1902, the Attorney General gave only modest ground in response. Puerto Rican artists were also “American artists,” he wrote, before cautioning that “it is clearly not inconceivable for a man to be an American artist within the meaning of such a statute and yet,” like an “American tribal Indian, or a native Alaskan,” be “not a citizen of the United States.”

Around the same time, Degetau sought to have congressional allies shepherd a bill through Congress making him a delegate who – like those from traditional territories – could speak but not vote in the House. Appearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, Degetau addressed concerns that Puerto Rican legislation would become a precedent for the Philippines by stressing how U.S. military authorities promised Puerto Ricans but not Filipinos U.S.

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179 See supra note 178.

180 Id.

citizenship and required from Puerto Rican but not Filipino officeholders naturalization-like oaths to uphold the U.S. Constitution, give allegiance to the United States, and renounce fidelity to foreign nations.\textsuperscript{182} The attempt to secure gains for Puerto Rico by distinguishing it from the Philippines worked in part. The Committee recommended the bill, only to have the Senate strike the language from a bill that it passed, thus dooming the effort for the term.\textsuperscript{183}

By mid-1902, it was becoming clear that Degetau’s plan was not paying expected dividends. In seeking clarification of the status of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans, Degetau had succeeded in finding numerous ways to place before U.S. officials disputes involving whether Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens and whether Puerto Rico was a traditional U.S. territory. In each case, U.S. officials had responded with mixes of evasion, ambiguity, and half-measures. Administrators had not stepped into the doctrinal breach in the ways that Degetau had anticipated. To add insult to injury, his efforts to sway public and official opinion in favor of Puerto Rican racial capacity did little to stem what he perceived to be mainlanders’ false criticisms of Puerto Rico, as when anti-imperialist Bishop John Spalding announced in mid-1902 that in “the tropics the race is and, probably always will be, indolent, ignorant, weak and sensual.”\textsuperscript{184}

Back in Puerto Rico, Federales noted Degetau’s disappointing first term and made it part of their 1902 campaign.\textsuperscript{185} Remaining in the race, Federales won gains at the polls, reducing both the Republicano majority in the House of Delegates and Degetau’s previously lop-sided margin of victory.\textsuperscript{186} For Degetau, two years of arguing questions related to citizenship before federal administrators and other largely nonjudicial audiences had neither produced the

\textsuperscript{182} House Comm. on Insular Affairs, \textit{supra} note 181, at 34-39.

\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Id.}, at 38-39; \textit{Porto Rican Land Bills Passed Senate, [NEWS]}, June 26, 1902, available at CIHCAM 11/L4.

\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Prelate Vexes Porto Ricans, DETROIT J.}, June 2, 1902, available at CIHCAM 18/L1.

\textsuperscript{185} The Federales’ candidate for resident commissioner Rafael Cuevas Zequeira, for instance, spoke of the need for a Puerto Rican representative in Washington who would fight hard and pursue outcomes other than just U.S. citizenship. \textit{Manifiesto del Sr. Cuebas, LA DEMOCRACIA}, Oct. 28, 1902, 1; \textit{BAYRON TORO, supra} note 30.

\textsuperscript{186} \textit{BAYRON TORO, supra} note 30, at 119-21.
recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens that Degetau sought nor improved Degetau’s electoral standing on the island. His approach required adjustment.

IV. DEGETAU TURNS TO TEST CASES FOR CITIZENSHIP, 1902-1905.

As Degetau contemplated the start of his second term in Washington as Resident Commissioner, he mustered his prior arguments to the U.S. public and federal officials behind new attempts to win U.S. citizenship, this time through judicial test cases. Here, as his faith in courts and law dovetailed with his failures to convince nonjudicial officials to vindicate his imperial-constitutional vision, Degetau came to treat courts as uniquely likely to hear and evaluate his claims.

Degetau’s first, best opportunity had already arisen. On August 2, 1902, the Treasury Department then responsible for administering U.S. immigration laws weighed in on the citizenship question at the heart of Degetau’s constitutional vision by issuing a circular that categorized Puerto Ricans as aliens.\(^1\) Immigration authorities’ jurisdiction expanded accordingly. Though islanders previously had “frequently disembarked unmolested in New York,” they would now be “subject to the same examinations as are enforced against people from countries over which the United States claims no right of sovereignty.”\(^2\) The first application of the law came when the S.S. Philadelphia, which was already en route when the new policy issued, landed in New York, and officials held a Puerto Rican passenger named Isabel Gonzalez over for inspection at Ellis Island.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Circular No. 97, Aug. 2, 1902, in CIRCULAR INSTRUCTIONS OF THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT RELATING TO THE TARIFF, NAVIGATION, AND OTHER LAWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1902 (1903) [hereinafter Circular No. 97].

\(^2\) Federico Degetau to Secretary of Treasury, Oct. 5, 1902, CIHCAM 3/VI/56; Circular No. 97, supra note 187.

\(^3\) Transcript of Record at 1, 3-6, Gonzales v. Williams, 192 U.S. 1 (1904) (No. 225) [hereinafter Gonzales Transcript]. I follow the usage of Isabel Gonzalez and her brother Luis Gonzalez in signing their names and omit the accent marks. Isabel Gonzalez to Federico Degetau, Apr. 10, 1904, CIHCAM 5/I/5; Luis Gonzalez to Federico Degetau, Feb. 5, 1903, CIHCAM 3/VII/35.
There, Gonzalez confronted a powerful arm of the U.S. administrative state. Exercising both prosecutorial and judicial functions, and insulated from most formal judicial review, hundreds of immigration inspectors determined the residence rights of as many as 5,000 immigrants a day. Their line inspections were standardized, high-volume, and summary. They sent ambiguous cases before Boards of Special Inquiry that could end their nonpublic hearings in minutes and deny immigrants rights to an attorney or to see or rebut evidence. Several months earlier the well-regarded Wall Street lawyer William Williams had become the new Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island. Concerned by what he perceived to be the “radical sociological, industrial, racial and intellectual distinctions” distinguishing northwestern and southeastern Europeans, Williams implemented policies that doubled the exclusion rate in his first year. Following those policies, inspectors determined that Gonzalez was pregnant out of wedlock and excluded her as an undesirable “alien.”

Gonzalez responded by petitioning for habeas corpus before the U.S. Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York. Seeing at stake in the case “the very difficult question of Constitutional law whether or not a Porto Rican was a citizen of the United States,” Commissioner of Immigration William Williams hired a private lawyer who, he later wrote, performed “exceedingly well.” On October 7, Judge E. Henry Lacombe announced his decision: Because Gonzalez “was by birth an alien,” he reasoned, she so remained,
Williams was thrilled. The legal decision had validated his action and the legal analysis undergirding it, advanced his racial agenda, and confirmed his authority over recently annexed peoples. As he told a superior upon learning that a billing error made it likely that Williams would pay out of pocket the $250 fee of the lawyer Williams had hired, “[s]uch loss will be very slight in comparison with the satisfaction of having secured a favorable decision for the Government in the Gonzalez case.” Gonzalez sought Supreme Court review.

After learning of the case in mid-October 1902, Degetau made the risky political decision to enter the Supreme Court appeal as amicus curiae. If the litigation produced no gains, it would provide Federales ammunition and isolate him from fellow Republicanos like Speaker of the House of Delegates Manuel F. Rossy, who was already deriding Degetau’s strategy. “[J]ust as your admission to the Supreme Court bar did not bring us citizenship,” Rossy wrote Degetau, “your opinion” of how the system works “notwithstanding,” U.S. citizenship “will have to be via legislation.”

Gonzalez’s case, which rested on the question of her alienage, appeared likely to many to determine Puerto Ricans’ citizenship status because of the widespread presumption that those not alien to the United States – i.e., U.S. nationals – were always also U.S. citizens. Degetau had made this assumption in his recent letter to Roosevelt. So too had Judge E. Henry Lacombe when he had decided Gonzalez’s case in the U.S. Circuit Court. But the equation was not inevitable, as the former lead lawyer in the 1901 Insular Cases,

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199 In re Gonzalez, 118 F. 941, 941 (C.C.S.D.N.Y. 1902).
200 On Williams’s view that Puerto Ricans were aliens, see infra notes 207-208 and accompanying text.
202 Gonzales Transcript, supra note 189, at 10.
203 Brief Filed by Leave of the Court by Federico Degetau at 2, Gonzales, 192 U.S. 1 (1904) (No. 225) [hereinafter Gonzales Amicus Brief].
204 Manuel Rossy to Federico Degetau, May 12, 1903, CIHCAM 4/II/176 (“como nada influyó su admisión [sic] como Abogado ante el Tribunal Supremo, en lo referente á la ciudadania [sic]”; “a pesar de su opinion [sic], será mediante una ley”).
Frederic Coudert, demonstrated in a 1903 Columbia Law Review article. Gonzalez should prevail in her appeal, he argued, because Puerto Ricans were neither citizens nor “American aliens,” but instead something in between: noncitizen U.S. nationals.\(^205\) The novelty of Coudert’s suggestion was evident in the bafflement of his interlocutors.\(^206\) Commissioner Williams contested Coudert’s claim that exclusion of Puerto Ricans like Gonzalez “kept out Americans from the country.”\(^207\) Assuring Coudert that immigration policies only applied to non-“Americans,” Williams presumed that Coudert would agree with his use of “Americans as synonymous with U. S. citizens.”\(^208\) Coudert’s eventual client – Isabel Gonzalez – similarly denied that Puerto Ricans could sensibly be both noncitizens and non-aliens, decrying such a result as the “incongruous status” of “neither Americans nor foreigners.”\(^209\)

Apparently exercising her prerogatives as litigant, Gonzalez secured from Coudert a brief to the Court consistent with her expressed desire that the case result in recognition of her and other Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens.\(^210\) To make that case, which Coudert indicated would apply to Filipinos as well, Coudert portrayed U.S. citizenship as broadly distributed and of little consequence.\(^211\) He here reprised his argument from Downes v. Bidwell (1901) that the 14th Amendment and international law gave all U.S. peoples – including “women, children[,] and all persons in the Territories” – a “passive” or “naked” citizenship synonymous with U.S. nationality.\(^212\)

\(^205\) Coudert, supra note 35, at 20.

\(^206\) In advocating that Puerto Ricans be neither citizens nor aliens, Coudert sought for Puerto Ricans an intermediate status quite like what Coudert described the Court as having already conferred upon Puerto Rico: classification both as “domestic territory” and as outside “the words ‘throughout the United States,’ in the revenue clause of the Constitution.” Id., at 20, 25. Consistent as his approach may have been with the prior Insular Cases, he lacked persuasive, positive U.S. precedents and turned instead to the practices of the British and French empires for support. Id., at 15-17, 29-32.


\(^208\) Williams to Coudert, supra note 207.

\(^209\) Isabel Gonzalez, Sauce for Goose and Gander, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 5, 1905, 6.

\(^210\) See Brief of Petitioner, Gonzales v. Williams, 192 U.S. 1 (No. 225) [hereinafter Gonzales Petitioner Brief].

\(^211\) Id., at 3.

\(^212\) Coudert’s Downes Argument, supra note 99, at 41; Brief for Plaintiffs in Error at 92, 88, Downes, 182 U.S. 244 (1901) (No. 507) [hereinafter Downes Plaintiffs Brief].
Though American Indians and antebellum people of color occupied statuses intermediate between citizen and alien, Coudert cast the reasons for their exceptional status as bolstering his case. Indians’ noncitizenship depended not on the status of where they were born but on a circumstance inapplicable to Puerto Rico: allegiance to a tribe rather than to the United States.213 That distinction provided a potential way to placate those like Democratic lawyer-Senator Donelson Caffery of Louisiana who worried that Filipinos “incapable of reaching our standard of government or civilization . . . might inoculate our citizenship with the poison of theirs.”214 As Coudert had already explained in Downes, the United States could class “uncivilized” Filipinos and American Indians as peoples owing tribal allegiances that rendered them peculiarly ineligible for 14th Amendment citizenship.215

In discussing the classification of antebellum people of color as noncitizens in the Dred Scott case, Coudert also built on arguments he had presented to the Court in Downes. There, he had contended that Chief Justice Roger Taney had stressed how free blacks were “capable of being made property.”216 They had been, Coudert had concluded, constitutionally “different and apart from the rest of humanity,” “half man, half beast.”217 Stressing that Puerto Ricans did not “occupy that debased position,” he had also reminded the Court that Taney’s “views have been repudiated by the American people in the Civil War, by three amendments to the Constitution of the United States, by this court, and by forty years of advancing civilization.”218 Now he added that finding Puerto Ricans to be other than U.S. citizens would require, through “recourse to the two

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213 See Gonzales Petitioner Brief, supra note 210, at 6; see also Coudert’s Downes Argument, supra note 99, at 42-44; Downes Plaintiffs Brief, supra note 212, at 78-99.
215 U.S. CONST. amend. XIV, § 1; supra note 213.
217 Downes Plaintiffs Brief, supra note 212, at 95, 84.
218 Coudert’s Downes Argument, supra note 99, at 43; Downes Plaintiffs Brief, supra note 212, at 99.
precedents in our history of which we are least proud,” “a repetition of [those cases’] peculiar, and, from a standard of American civilization, most anomalous result.”219

In his amicus brief to the Court, Federico Degetau took a dramatically different approach. As a former Spanish citizen, he associated his island with markings of male honor like economic self-sufficiency, martial experience, and exercise of political and civil rights. Reinterpreting rather than rejecting colonial and expansionist precedents, he drew imperial and cross-cultural comparisons. He did not seek “passive” U.S. citizenship akin to that enjoyed by women and people of color, nor did he seek to gain active citizenship for other colonized and marginalized people. Instead, he claimed – for Puerto Ricans like himself and through arguments that deprecated members of other groups – a robust U.S. citizenship associated with white men, civilization, economic and legal opportunities, political participation, and military and tax obligations. In fact, he argued while drawing on his experiences with U.S. officials before and during his first term, Puerto Ricans already occupied these roles.

A key to Degetau’s argument was the contention that Puerto Ricans were not “natives” in the colonial sense. When the Treaty of Paris vested Congress with discretion to determine the citizenship status of “native inhabitants” of Spain’s former possessions, he wrote, it referred to “the uncivilized tribes of the Philippine Islands” and not “Spanish citizens born in Porto Rico.”220 Those citizens, he elaborated, had enjoyed such rights as representation in the national legislature, national citizenship accompanied by constitutional protections, “the same honors and prerogatives as the native-born in Castille,” and broad autonomy.221 This attempt to conflate the status of those Puerto Ricans born in continental Spain with those born on the island tracked a goal that predominantly island-born liberal-autonomists had long pursued but not achieved during Spanish rule. Through it, Degetau also aimed to position Puerto Rico favorably

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219 Gonzales Petitioner Brief, supra note 210, at 39.


within the broader context of historical U.S. expansion. He claimed that Puerto Ricans differed from ostensibly, implicitly inferior Filipino “tribes,” “Mongolians,” and the “uncivilized native tribes [of] Alaska,” as well as from American Indians, who – inexplicably, he implied – could become U.S. citizens by renouncing tribal allegiances while Puerto Ricans could not because they had no foreign allegiance to renounce.\textsuperscript{222} Instead, he indicated, Puerto Ricans resembled the French and Mexicans who had been incorporated into U.S. citizenship in earlier U.S. cessions. Along these lines, he emphasized that islanders already paid U.S. taxes, swore allegiance to the U.S. Constitution and laws, were soon likely to elect a nonvoting delegate to the House of Representatives, and were Americans and citizens of a U.S. territory.\textsuperscript{223}

Attempting to boost his countrymen at others’ expense in an additional way, Degetau sought to distinguish what he depicted as the active Puerto Rican citizenry from Cubans and Filipinos. President McKinley, using language that could have described a marriage contract, had had Cubans in 1898 grant their “honest submission” to receive from the United States “support and protection.”\textsuperscript{224} And, using language suggestive of the relationship of parent and child, he had had Filipinos swear to “recognize and accept the supreme authority of the United States.”\textsuperscript{225} By contrast, prospective Puerto Rican officeholders (including Degetau) had renounced their allegiance to Spain and agreed to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies home or foreign.”\textsuperscript{226} This, Degetau claimed, effected “a plain renunciation of all foreign allegiance and an explicit acceptance of the duties of citizenship.”\textsuperscript{227} The oath invoked male realms of political rights and participation by speaking of defending the nation from foreign enemies, occupying political office, and upholding the U.S. Constitution. Taken together, Degetau’s comparisons implied

\textsuperscript{222} Id., at 28 (citing as the source of the quotation “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898. Correspondence with the United States Peace Commissioners, p. 961”), 33-36.
\textsuperscript{223} Id., at 21-22, 33-34.
\textsuperscript{224} Id., at 25-26.
\textsuperscript{225} Id.
\textsuperscript{226} Id. (quoting Degetau’s own certificate).
\textsuperscript{227} Id.
that Cuba agreed to receive protection from the United States like a wife; the Philippines accepted the authority of the United States like a child; Puerto Rico swore allegiance to and took up the defense of the United States, like a man.

Degetau portrayed an island population that actively and naturally blended into the United States and that deserved legal and professional opportunities open only to U.S. citizens. Under the Foraker Act, he related, mainlanders resident in Puerto Rico, along with all Puerto Ricans, constituted a single body politic – the people of Puerto Rico. Since mainlanders retained their U.S. citizenship even after becoming part of the people of Puerto Rico, which he treated as equivalent to becoming a citizen of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican citizenship could not be an alternative to U.S. citizenship. Thus, Degetau argued, Puerto Rican citizenship was territorial citizenship, coexisting with 14th Amendment birthright citizenship. Puerto Ricans also needed U.S. citizenship to exercise autonomy and control within business and law, which Degetau highlighted by noting federal requirements that ship captains, bank directors, and prosecuting litigants in the Court of Claims be U.S. citizens.

Degetau’s arguments implicitly asked the court to consider him, an accomplished civil servant, rather than Gonzalez, an unmarried mother, as the model for Puerto Rican citizenship. He closed on a personal note, reprising one of his earlier gambits: “If I were an alien, I could not have attained the highest honor in my professional career, that of taking, as a member of the bar of this Honorable Court, the oath to maintain the Constitution of the United States, this oath being incompatible with allegiance to any other power.”

At oral arguments on December 4, 1903, the Supreme Court appeared to agree with Degetau at least in part. According to one observer, Chief Justice Melville Fuller dismissed the contention that Degetau’s admission to the Court’s bar was “by courtesy” rather than “by right,” at which point the Solicitor General all but conceded

228 Id., at 6-7, 12.
229 Id., at 12.
230 Id., at 12-14, 37.
231 Id., at 37-40.
232 Id., at 43.
that Puerto Ricans could not be aliens.\footnote{Letter to Editor, Pedro García Olivieri, \textit{Puerto Rico en la Corte Suprema Nacional}, P.R. HERALD, Dec. 12, 1903, 1127 (“admitido por cortesía del”; “el Comisionado estaba allí por su derecho”).}

It was less clear whether justices believed that islanders were U.S. citizens. When Coudert sought in his remarks to cast the alternative as a monarchical “subjection” best known to U.S. law through its association with the Dred Scott case, Justice William Day objected, indicating a preference for a less charged term like “liegemen.”\footnote{Argument of Frederic R. Coudert, Jr., Esq., on Behalf of the Petitioner-Appellant at 54-55, 49-53, 56, \textit{passim}, Gonzales v. Williams, 192 U.S. 1 (1904) (No. 225).} He apparently wanted to decline Coudert’s proposal that the Court recognize a relatively modest version of U.S. citizenship and thereby avoid creating U.S. subjects or new rights for Puerto Ricans.\footnote{For more on Coudert and his client, Isabel Gonzalez, see Christina Duffy Burnett, \textit{“They say I am not an American . . .”: The Noncitizen National and the Law of American Empire}, 48 Va. J. INT’L L. 659 (2008); Erman, \textit{Meanings of Citizenship}, supra note 33; Erman, \textit{supra} note 15, at 77-195.}

Though Day was reluctant to acknowledge explicitly that the Court had drained much meaning from U.S. citizenship, that did not mean he had qualms about U.S. treatment of women, people of color, or colonized peoples. In \textit{Downes}, for instance, Justice White had depicted U.S. citizenship as a status rich in rights without addressing the ways that unequal U.S. treatment of women and people of color appeared to belie that claim.

On January 4, 1904, Chief Justice Fuller announced the unanimous and narrow holding of the Court: “[W]e…cannot concede…that the word ‘alien,’ as used in the [immigration] act of 1891, embraces the citizens of Porto Rico.”\footnote{\textit{Gonzales}, 192 U.S. at 12.} His reasoning tracked that of both Bureau of Insular Affairs Law Officer Charles Magoon, who had argued prior to passage of the Foraker Act that islanders would only have the right to enter the United States if a federal law made the island into a part of the United States, and Degetau, who had focused on particularities of U.S.-Puerto Rican relations. Reviewing, \textit{inter alia}, the Treaty of Paris and Foraker Act, Fuller explained that the United States had made “[t]he nationality of the island…American” and integrated Puerto Rico into the United
States. In Puerto Rico, the United States had created a civil government with heads named by the U.S. President, implemented congressional oversight, established a U.S. district court, run judicial process in the name of the U.S. President, nationalized Puerto Rican vessels, and put most U.S. statutes into force. Degetau had hoped that arguments tightly focused on Puerto Rico might secure from the Court a particular incremental result: U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans on grounds not necessarily applicable to the Philippines. The Court, however, ruled more incrementally still. It found that the Treasury guideline under which Gonzalez had been held was invalid while not addressing congressional power to implement similar rules.

And as to whether Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens, nationals, subjects, or liegemen, Fuller wrote: “We are not required to discuss…the contention of Gonzales’s counsel that the cession of Porto Rico accomplished the naturalization of its people; or that of Commissioner Degetau, in his excellent argument.” Having struck down the outlier Treasury Department position that Puerto Ricans were aliens, the justices joined the numerous administrators who found it profitable to evade clarifying the U.S. citizenship status of Puerto Ricans even at the expense of conceding islanders rights. The strategic silence rested on the possibility of a status intermediate to citizen and alien. It avoided openly contradicting the widely held belief that U.S. citizenship and U.S. nationality were coextensive while leaving lawmakers and administrators room to maneuver in the control of new territorial acquisitions. Potentially signaling reluctance by the Court to declare Puerto Ricans or Filipinos to be U.S. citizens, the decision became to some an invitation to decide the matter politically and administratively.

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237 Id., at 10, 8-9, 11-15.
238 Id., at 10-11.
239 Gonzales, 192 U.S. 1 (1904).
240 Id., at 12.
241 On the role of courts in policing constitutional outliers, see, for example, Keck, supra note 7, at 528; WHITTINGTON, supra note 5, at 105; MICHAEL KLARMAN, FROM THE CLOSET TO THE ALTAR 205 (2012).
U.S. empire and constitutional democracy. 243

For Degetau, judicial vagueness – even when coupled as in Gonzales with an expansion of Puerto Rican rights – served no ends. He had campaigned on promises of winning Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship and, through that step, constitutional rights and recognition of Puerto Rico as a traditional U.S territory on the road to statehood. Clarification of islanders’ citizenship status now seemed further from reach than ever. The decision also isolated Degetau from fellow Republicanos. According to party leader Manuel Rossy, the case “did not interest opinion ... because everyone expected what occurred.” 244 Afterward, others began preparing to challenge Degetau for the party’s nomination. 245 Having already placed his bets, Degetau stayed in Washington to play his remaining cards. 246

Hoping to make the Gonzales decision “a stepping stone to a more decided recognition of the rights of Puerto Ricans in the United States,” Degetau launched a new campaign just five days afterward. 247 On January 9, he wrote the Board of Election Commissioners in Chicago about the voting rights of Puerto Ricans there. 248 Board attorney William Wheelock replied that he had recently refused to register Puerto Ricans because he deemed them to be noncitizens. 249 Sending Wheelock his Amicus Brief in Gonzales and a copy of the decision, Degetau asked him to reconsider. 250 In a February 23 letter to Degetau, Wheelock affirmed his view that

243 Cf. Whittington, supra note 15, at 72 (suggesting that general articulations of constitutional visions by the Supreme Court may at times be of more moment than the specific judgments that it issues); Novak, supra note 15, at 767-68 (observing how law is a creative source of power that operates both within and beyond courts). But cf. Cass Sunstein, Beyond Judicial Minimalism, 43 TULSA L. REV. 825, 839, passim (2008) (implicitly placing judicially minimalistic reasoning and holdings in opposition to judicial activism).

244 Manuel Rossy to Federico Degetau, Jan. 26, 1904, CIHCAM 4/VII/14 (“no interesó á la opinión”; “así la esperaban todos”).

245 [Illegible] to Federico Degetau, May 7, 1904, CIHCAM 5/I/25; Scandal at Mayaguez, WASH. POST, Apr. 19, 1903, 1; Plans a Surprise in Porto Rico, CHL DAILY, July 25, 1898, 1.

246 See Draft, [Federico Degetau] to Mr. Henry, [June 1904], CIHCAM 5/II/8; see also Erman, supra note 15, at 180.


248 Wheelock to Degetau, supra note 247.

249 Id.

Puerto Ricans were not U.S. citizens, Gonzales notwithstanding.251 He quickly added that he had no record of the identities of the potential test-case litigants.252

In the midst of his correspondence with Wheelock, Degetau separately won floor privileges, though still no vote, in the House of Representatives.253 Because the Senate continued to refuse to act, he also remained a Resident Commissioner rather than joining representatives of traditional territories under the banner of delegate.254 Using his new powers, he introduced a bill to declare islanders to be U.S. citizens.255

Two weeks later, a new test case took shape when Juan Rodríguez, a nineteen-year-old native of Puerto Rico, requested that the Board of Labor Employment at the U.S. Navy Yard register him as a job candidate.256 Navy-yard rules stated that “[n]o applicant will be registered unless . . . he is a citizen of the United States,” so his application appeared to raise the question that the Gonzales Court had reserved.257 President Roosevelt had tried to avoid such problems by declaring that “birth or naturalization in Porto Rico” would also suffice.258 But as government lawyers would soon argue, Roosevelt’s rule could be read not to reach the job that Rodríguez sought.259 After the Assistant Secretary of State – himself a lawyer – concluded “that as Mr. Rodríguez is not a citizen of the United States he is not eligible for registration,” the Board deferred to that legal view and denied the application.260

251 Wheelock to Degetau, supra note 250.
252 Id.; see also W.W. Wheelock to Federico Degetau, Feb. 26, 1904, CIHCAM 4/VIII/41.
255 H.R. 11592, 58th Cong. (1904), available at CIHCAM 4/VIII/19; Delegate from Porto Rico, supra note 253.
257 Brief for Appellant, Rodriguez, 25 App. D.C. 121 (1905) (No. 1504—No. 8 Special Calendar), CIHCAM 6/VI/33 [hereinafter Rodriguez Appellant Brief].
258 Id.
259 Brief for Appellees at 11-13, Rodriguez, 25 App. D.C. 121 (1905) (No. 1504—No. 8 Special Calendar), CIHCAM 6/VI/34.
260 Rodriguez Transcript, supra note 256, at 7; see also 1 MEN OF MARK IN AMERICA 274 (Merrill E. Gates ed., 1905).
Rodríguez’s rejected application for navy-yard employment thus became a promising test case. Degetau launched it in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia by filing a Petition for Mandamus seeking to compel the navy-yard board to register Rodríguez.  

When Degetau finally returned to San Juan in late June 1904, his political isolation was palpable. Weeks earlier, he had declined membership in a committee of the Republican Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives because he “did not deem it entirely consistent . . . to take a side in the internal differences of our national political parties” “so long as [he] was not recognized as a citizen of the United States, and was called ‘Resident Commissioner.’” In the interim, Republicanos had sent delegates to the Republican National Convention, where they secured two votes. In island political speeches on “the status of Puerto Rico,” the opposition paper La Democracia reported, Degetau continued to argue “that the Supreme Court in Washington had to determine it.” Like many Republicanos, La Democracia disagreed: “Few share this opinion” of Degetau’s, it reported, for many “express the view that it is the National Congress that can and should take action concerning American citizenship.”

As summer gave way to fall, Republicanos declined to nominate Degetau for a third term. Seeing opportunity in Republicanos’ disappointment and division, Federales reconstituted themselves as an umbrella Partido Unionista that sought self-government – be it as

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261 Rodríguez Transcript, supra note 256, at 3.
262 D. Federico Degetau y González, LA DEMOCRACIA, June 24, 1904, 2.
263 [Degetau] to Babcock, supra note 254.
264 INFORME DE LOS DELEGADOS DEL PARTIDO REPUBLICANO DE PUERTO RICO ANTE LA CONVENCION NACIONAL REPUBLICANA CELEBRADA EN CHICAGO, EN 21 DE JUNIO DE 1904, at 19-21, passim (1904), available at CIHCAM 6/L8; D. Federico Degetau y González, supra note 262.
265 El señor Degetau dio una conferencia en Ponce, LA DEMOCRACIA, Aug. 1, 1904, 2 (“el status de Puerto-Rico, manifestando que es la Corte Suprema de Washington la que ha de determinarlo”).
266 Id. (“De esta opinión del señor Degetau no son muchos aquí, que opinan que es el Congreso Nacional el que puede y debe tomar acuerdo sobre la ciudadanía americana”). As to whether recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens would bring recognition of Puerto Rico as a traditional U.S. territory, see Torruella, supra note 48, at 314 (arguing that Hawaii v. Mankichi, 190 U.S. 197 (1903), established as much).
a state of the Union, U.S. territory, or independent nation – and embraced more confrontational rhetoric than Republicanos had deployed.\textsuperscript{268} On November 8, Unionistas came to power, capturing the House of Delegates and the Resident Commissionership.\textsuperscript{269}

Degetau returned to Washington to use his final days as Resident Commissioner to continue his activism in support of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{270} When the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia on December 12 denied the petition that Degetau had filed for Rodríguez, Degetau and his client appealed.\textsuperscript{271} Degetau then made a final speech on the floor of the House of Representatives seeking U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{272}

In mid-February, Degetau filed his brief on Rodríguez’s behalf before the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{273} Implicitly acknowledging the pull of Coudert’s earlier arguments, Degetau addressed the suggestion that Puerto Ricans be recognized as noncitizen U.S. nationals and adopted the proposal that the Court recognize islanders as holders of a relatively inconsequential U.S. citizenship. Having largely presumed in \textit{Gonzales} that Puerto Ricans were either aliens or citizens, Degetau now made the argument explicit. He wrote: Congress had made most federal statutes – including many that referred to U.S. citizens and “not . . . ‘nationals’” – applicable in Puerto Rico, which indicated a congressional belief that Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens.\textsuperscript{274} Noting that the Supreme Court had “declared that Porto Rico is a territory of the United States,” he also asserted that Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens under a federal statute declaring “‘[a]ll persons born in the United States [with irrelevant exceptions] . . . to be citizens of the United States.’”\textsuperscript{275}

Despite his portrayals in \textit{Gonzales} of Puerto Ricans as

\textsuperscript{268} Asamblea para constituir la Unión de Puerto Rico, P.R. HERALD, Mar. 5, 1904, 1317; De cómo puede hacerse la unión, P.R. HERALD, Jan. 9, 1904, 1191; Ponce viene á ‘LA UNIÓN,’ LA DEMOCRACIA, Aug. 1, 1904, 1; CABÁN, supra note 13, at 184.
\textsuperscript{269} BAYRON TORO, supra note 30, at 125-26.
\textsuperscript{270} El señor Degetau, LA DEMOCRACIA, Nov. 29, 1904, 2.
\textsuperscript{271} Rodríguez Transcript, supra note 256, at 8-10.
\textsuperscript{272} DEGETAU, supra note 254.
\textsuperscript{273} The Legal Record, WASH. POST, Feb. 8, 1905, 9; Porto Rican Eligible, WASH. POST, Mar. 8, 1905, 6.
\textsuperscript{274} Rodríguez Appellant Brief, supra note 257.
\textsuperscript{275} Id.
independent, militarily and legislatively experienced male citizens, Degetau now deployed Coudert’s depiction of U.S. citizenship as widely distributed – presumably extending to Filipinos as well as Puerto Ricans – and relatively modest in its implications. The “middle ground” of being a “‘national[]’” but not a citizen “does not exist” under the U.S. “constitutional organization,” Degetau told the court, for unlike France or Spain “[o]ur constitution is not based on the principle of the sovereignty of the nation”; it is “[w]e the people” who “ordain and establish” it. But universal citizenship did not mean universal rights, Degetau assured the court. Citing the “‘minors and married women’” who were U.S. citizens, he insisted “that political privileges are not essential to citizenship.”

Degetau’s final attempts to win citizenship as Resident Commissioner proved unavailing. On March 4, Congress adjourned the 1903-1905 term, ending Degetau’s tenure as Resident Commissioner without making him a Delegate or Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens. Three days later, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia lifted a page from Gonzales and ruled for Rodríguez on noncitizenship grounds. President Roosevelt’s instructions that those demonstrating Puerto Rican citizenship “will not be required to show further evidence of citizenship,” it held, applied.

Among Puerto Ricans, Federico Degetau had unrivaled influence in Washington during the first half-dozen years of U.S. rule of his island. Nonetheless, his efforts as resident commissioner were by most measures failures. Five years of efforts had produced little progress on Degetau’s campaign promises to secure Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship, full constitutional protections, and residence in a traditional U.S. territory on the way to statehood. Rather, the United States consolidated a colonial regime in Puerto Rico on his watch. Neither federal policymakers nor U.S. adjudicative officials recognized Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens. And statehood seemed less

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276 Id. (quoting U.S. CONST. Preamble).
277 Id. (citing as the source of the nested quotation “Monsieur de Cogordan, in his book on French Nationality”).
279 Porto Rican Eligible, supra note 273 (citing the source of the quotation as “Rule 5” “of the civil service” “commission”); Rodríguez, 25 App. D.C. 121 (1905).
likely in 1905 than it had in 1899.280

V. POST-DEGETAU POLITICS AND CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT

Though Degetau’s turn at the center of Puerto Rican politics had ended by 1905, the struggles in which Degetau participated and the dynamics he helped animate continued, as the following brief overview illuminates.281 Beginning in 1905, Degetau’s now-dominant Unionista opponents launched a dozen-year-long political campaign for greater self-government. They joined U.S. officials on the island, War Department administrators, and Congressmen in debates over U.S. policy in Puerto Rico. As they did so, a conventional wisdom – built upon the ambiguous doctrinal innovations that Degetau’s activities had helped bring about – developed: The Supreme Court was unwilling to declare Puerto Ricans to be U.S. citizens. That status would bring Puerto Ricans no new rights. And Puerto Ricans could not expect more than modest extensions of self-government. The Court, which played little role in these developments in 1905-1917, began in the 1920s expressly recognizing the status relationships and legal frameworks within which lawmakers, Puerto Ricans, and U.S. administrators had worked.

In the years after 1905, Degetau largely withdrew from U.S. and island politics and instead cultivated his coffee farm.282 “I have now nearly completely retired from public life” to the mountainous island interior, he wrote in 1910.283 In retrospect, he still counted “the high distinction of appearing before the U.S. Supreme Court” as among his greatest accomplishments during his fight as Resident Commissioner to win for islanders “definition of our status as American citizens.”284 In 1914, after succumbing to a longstanding

280 Degetau initially succeeded and ultimately failed to use litigation to expand his political movement, garner support for it, and leverage his other political tactics. See Skrentny, supra note 130, at 231 (suggesting the possibility of these benefits of litigation).
281 For a more detailed account, see, for example, Erman, supra note 15, at 196-277.
283 Draft, Federico Degetau to Julio Gonzalez Pola, Dec. 6, 1910, CIHCAM 5/IV/15 (“Retirado yo ya de la vida pública casi por completo”).
284 WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, ET AL., EL PASO DE MR. BRYAN POR SAN JUAN 24-25 (1910) (“de adquirir de ellos poderes, por la definición de nuestro status como ciudadanos...”)
and mysterious malady, he was laid to rest in a Puerto Rican homeland that – as he had to the end – held an uncertain place within the U.S. empire-state.285

As the ambiguity in Puerto Ricans’ status at the core of Degetau’s experience of U.S. empire persisted, others – particularly now-dominant Unionistas – took up the fight with U.S. officials over the place of Puerto Rico in the U.S. order.286 After more staid tactics failed in 1905-1908 to win from the Republican-controlled U.S. political branches greater self-government for Puerto Rico, the Unionista-controlled House of Delegates moved to transform the stage of debate.287 In 1909, to protest lack of Puerto Rican participation in island governance, the delegates refused to pass a budget.288 With government shutdown looming absent the new budget, the federal political branches enacted legislation that left the prior budget in place until a subsequent one replaced it.289 The law also authorized renewed oversight of the island and its government by the Bureau of Insular Affairs.290 Bureau officials thus joined the presidential appointees on the island with whom they now worked, federal lawmakers, and elected Puerto Ricans at the center of debates on U.S.-Puerto Rican relations.

At newly elected Republican President William Taft’s request, War Department officials began in late 1909 investigating potential

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286 BAYRON TORO, supra note 30, at 123-57. Among myriad examples of scholarship on colonized peoples’ experiences occupying ambiguous statuses, see Erman, supra note 15; Burnett, supra note 235, at 684.
288 Comisión de la cámara en Washington, LA DEMOCRACIA, Apr. 2, 1909, 1; Brief, Luis Muñoz Rivera et al., reprinted in 44 CONG. REC. 4337-47 (1909); 44 CONG. REC. 2340-46; W. F. Willoughby et al. to Secretary of the Interior, Mar. 29, 1909, in S. REP. NO. 61-10 (1910); Regis Post to Secretary of the Interior, Mar. 17, 1909, in S. REP. NO. 61-10 (1910).
289 See supra note 288.
reforms for Puerto Rico. Among their discoveries: that U.S. citizenship no longer carried with it the “great powers, rights, privileges, and immunities” that Bureau Law Officer Charles Magoon had perceived in it in 1900. In this, Degetau had played a meaningful role. As officials had met his claims to rights associated with citizenship by extending Puerto Ricans those rights independent of their citizenship status, the rights that islanders could expect to gain if they became U.S. citizens had diminished. As early as 1905, the Republican Secretary and future-Governor of Puerto Rico Regis Post – who had previously studied law and who sought to influence federal legislation – had speculated that U.S. citizenship would be a “perfectly empty gift.” It would not, he had written, threaten “any of our control” or extend islanders new rights. But, he added, it would placate Puerto Ricans who “consider [noncitizenship] rather a slur on their honor.” On December 21, 1909, new Bureau Law Officer Paul Charlton agreed in a legal memo that he sent up the chain of command. Reflecting the extent to which rights had already been delinked from U.S. citizenship, he wrote that the:

“only rights which a citizen . . . acquires by reason of his federal citizenship are: (1) The protection of the United States . . . by a passport . . . ; and (2) Access to the federal Courts[], both . . . rights . . . uniformly possessed by citizens of Porto Rico.”

U.S. citizenship – he concluded and War Department officials soon publicly advocated – could be safely extended to Puerto Ricans.

Although Unionistas did not oppose U.S. citizenship in 1910, their priority remained greater self-government. Unlike Degetau,
they focused on administrators and political officials to the relative exclusion of courts.

Seeking to present the Republican-controlled Congress a united front, Unionistas and Republican administrators of Puerto Rico crafted a joint compromise proposal that envisioned collective naturalization of Puerto Ricans, a fully elected island legislature, and an absolute governmental veto. In June 1910, the House of Representatives passed a bill roughly along these lines. Later in the term, the Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico recommended similar action, observing that litigants had repeatedly and unavailingly asked the Supreme Court to determine the U.S. citizenship status of Puerto Ricans. The committee singled out the case in which Degetau had participated for special comment: Because “the Chief Justice [in Gonzales] intimat[ed] in regard to that question that the court will not seek a ford until it comes to the stream,” the question was ripe for political resolution. “[T]o all intents and purposes, the Porto Rican people are not citizens of the United States.” The Senate as a whole, however, did not act before

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296 Taft’s Message Urges Reforms, CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE, Dec. 7, 1910, A15; For Elective Citizenship, WASH. POST, May 4, 1910, 5; Porto Ricans in City, WASH. POST, Apr. 27, 1910, 4; Colton to Secretary, Mar. 2[5?], 1910, CDO:1; Cablegram, Colton to Dickinson, Apr. 15, 1910, MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-82; Colton to Taft, Apr. 20, 1910, MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-85; Colton to Dickinson, Apr. 1[?], 1910, MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-84; Copy, Santiago Iglesias, [Title unknown], UNIÓN OBRERA, Apr. 29, 1910, CDO:1; Memorandum of [George Colton], [Apr. or May 1910], MD NARA 350/5A/341/3377-86.

297 Cabranes, supra note 13, at 457.


299 Id. Although contemporaries saw Gonzales as an important judicial statement on the status of colonized peoples, see, e.g., JAMES PARKER HALL, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW 73 (1910) (citing Gonzales in classifying U.S. colonized peoples as noncitizen nationals); H. EDGAR BARNES, SELECTED CASES IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW 214 (4th ed. 1913) (including the full Gonzales opinion among highlighted cases), scholars have accorded the case and its narrow statutory holding little attention, see Burnett, supra note 286, at 661-62 & n.8. Others misread it, seeing a consequential denial of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans in the Court’s reservation of that question. See, e.g., RIVERA RAMOS, supra note 13, at 4; DICK THORNBURGH, PUERTO RICO’S FUTURE 49 (2007); CARLOS R. SOTERO, LATINOS AND AMERICAN LAW 24 (2006). One has argued that the case matters because it introduced into U.S. law a status between alien and citizen, that of the noncitizen U.S. national. See Burnett, supra (drawing on the briefs as well as the opinion itself to expand her conception of the case); see also, e.g., Lisa Napoli, Legal Recognition of the National Identity of a Colonized People: The Case of Puerto Rico, 19 B.C. THIRD WORLD L.J. 159, 187 n.132 (1998). But the justices in Gonzales, who did not use the word national, declined to decide whether the Constitution countenanced noncitizen U.S. nationals. Degetau insisted that it did not.
the expiration of the term, and the bill died. Democrats then took control of the House of Representatives in 1911, creating a divided federal government that declined to enact Puerto Rican reform.

When the political landscape again shifted in 1913 – as Democrats took control of the federal political branches for only the second time since the Civil War – proposals for Puerto Rican reform reemerged. The fate of Puerto Rico in the House of Representatives now lay in the hands of the Committee on Insular Affairs, and its recently elevated chair, the lawyer William Jones of Virginia. In 1900, Jones has been a fierce critic of Republican imperialism, savaging Republicans for withholding U.S. citizenship from Puerto Ricans, “seven-tenths of [whom] belong to the Caucasian race” and for instituting in Puerto Rico “irresponsible carpetbag government.” By 1914, the gap between Democrats and Republicans on Puerto Rican policy had narrowed. As Republicans increasingly saw benefits to modest liberalization of U.S. policy in Puerto Rico, newly ascendant Democrats now in control of offices administering the island had come to see value in continuing a substantial federal role there. Leading members in each party thus now agreed that Puerto Ricans could be safely extended U.S. citizenship, that such citizenship would signal permanent U.S. retention of Puerto Rico, and that the island was ready only for a modest expansion of self-government. In line with these views, Jones on February 24, 1914, introduced a bill under which Puerto Ricans would be collectively naturalized as U.S. citizens, gain an almost wholly elected island senate, and have an appointed

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300 Cabranes, supra note 13, at 458.
301 Id., at 458-63.
302 See Roper, supra note 118.
303 Cabranes, supra note 13, at 458-59; Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774 – Present, supra note 123.
304 33 CONG. REC. app. 232-35 (1900).
305 President Woodrow Wilson appointed a new Secretary of War and Governor of Puerto Rico, though he did not change the Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs. See, e.g., Policies of Our New War Minister, DETROIT FREE PRESS, Mar. 20, 1913, 4; Porto Rico’s Governor Sworn in, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 7, 1913, 8; War, WASH. POST, Oct. 31, 1915, R3; Gen. M’Intyre, 78, in Army 43 Years, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 17, 1944, 19.
306 Cf. infra notes 319-326 and accompanying text (revealing widespread support for such a bill in 1916).
On March 11, new Bureau of Insular Affairs law officer Felix Frankfurter sent the Secretary of War a memo soon passed on to Congress that reviewed the implications of recent federal decisions and laws for potential U.S. policies for Puerto Rico. In the years since 1900, Justice Edward Douglas White’s territorial nonincorporation doctrine had gained ground at the Court, appearing to play increasingly central roles in a series of Supreme Court decisions that – as Frankfurter’s predecessor had advocated in 1900 – denied that residents of territories like Puerto Rico had jury rights under the Constitution. Nonetheless, the Court had yet to embrace the nonincorporation doctrine unequivocally, and as a result Frankfurter cited both Justice Henry Brown’s and Justice White’s opinions in *Downes v. Bidwell* (1901) as authorities for what he perceived to be the controlling framework. Turning also to precedents involving Cuba, Hawai’i, the Panama Canal Zone, and the Dominican Republic, he argued that U.S. relations with dependent locales – including, presumably, whether to impose a tariff – were “matters solely for congressional competence.” That remained true, he elaborated, whatever the mix of constitutional rights, citizenship, and self-government that the United States put in place there.

It is worth pausing here to note the legal change underway. In

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308 Civil Government for Porto Rico: Hearings before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, United States Senate, 63d Cong., 2d sess., on S. 4604 a Bill to Provide a Civil Government for Porto Rico, and for Other Purposes (1914), 21-24 [hereinafter 1914 SENATE HEARINGS], available at MD NARA 350/5B/ 488/3377-216.
310 1914 SENATE HEARINGS, supra note 308, at 21-24.
311 *Id.* That legislating for Puerto Rico would not tie Congress’s hands concerning tariffs removed debate over the bill from the ongoing fight over protectionism. See, e.g., Karen Schnietz, *Democrats’ 1916 Tariff Commission: Responding to Dumping Fears and Illustrating the Consumer Costs of Protectionism*, 72 BUS. HIST. REV. 1 (1998) (explaining that tariffs were a key political issue, with Democrats supporting lower tariffs – including on sugar – while Republicans favored protection); César J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom* 48-73, *passim* (1999) (examining early-20th-century complexities of setting tariffs on raw and refined sugar, the former of which was an input of the latter and both of which were produced domestically, in unincorporated territories, and overseas).
312 1914 SENATE HEARINGS, supra note 308, at 21-24.
1900-1904, Supreme Court justices had joined administrators and lawmakers in taking a tentative approach to the relationship between Constitution and empire. At the outset, lawmakers had explicitly denied Puerto Ricans only a single revenue-related constitutional protection and had taken no stand on the U.S. citizenship of Puerto Ricans or the eventual statehood of Puerto Rico. Many administrators, in turn, conceded rights to Puerto Ricans to avoid deciding constitutional questions concerning their status. And for their part, Supreme Court justices together proved unwilling to adopt or reject the view that the United States could not hold colonies populated by noncitizen subjects. As the citation to Gonzales by the Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico and those to both Brown and White by Frankfurter reflected, nonjudicial U.S. officials recognized the resultant ambiguity and the freedom that it gave them in charting federal policies for U.S. imperial acquisitions. And although they recognized that U.S. citizenship need not bring recipients many rights, they did not use the opportunity that the Court provided them to guarantee U.S. citizenship for all U.S. peoples and eventual statehood for all U.S. places. Instead, War Department officials and congressional leaders from both parties came to pursue policies consistent with maintaining U.S. colonies and colonized peoples.

Unionistas recognized the unfolding transformation of the promise of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. As they testified to Congress, U.S. officials had already indicated that “American citizenship for Porto Ricans does not suggest the most remote

313 For recent work dispelling heroic visions of courts protecting individual rights in the face of the strong, persistent, uniform opposition from other powerful institutions, see, for example, MICHAEL J. KLARMAN, FROM JIM CROW TO CIVIL RIGHTS (2004); ROSEN, supra note 118; MARK TUSHNET, A COURT DIVIDED (2006); GERALD N. ROSENBERG, THE HOLLOW HOPE (1991); cf. Keck, supra (arguing that Klaman, Rosen, and Tushnet overstate judicial impotence); BARRY FRIEDMAN, THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE (2009) (arguing that courts have come to track public opinion closely while acknowledging exceptions that include the stickiness of precedents); KLARMAN, supra note 241 (describing how judges both advanced gay rights and provoked backlashes against them during the two decades preceding publication).

314 Freedom to set federal policy brought with it potential responsibility for those policies. Cf. WHITTINGTON, supra note 15, at 113, 124-25 (detailing benefits to regimes of using the Court to avoid deciding issues that threaten to unravel their coalitions); Howard Gillman, How Political Parties Can Use the Courts to Advance Their Agendas: Federal Courts in the United States, 1875-1891, 96 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 511, 513 (2002).
intention on the part of the United States to ever grant statehood to [the Puerto Rican] people.” Federal administrators and elected officials, they believed, instead envisioned U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans foreclosing independence for Puerto Rico and with it one potential path to island self-government. As a result, Unionistas worried, collective naturalization could make islanders “citizens of an inferior class” and Puerto Rico “perpetually a colony, a dependency.” These objections, the Washington Star reported, led congressional leaders to delay action on the bill in the 1913-1915 term.

Congress returned to consideration of new legislation for unincorporated U.S. territories in 1916. In line with Frankfurter’s assurance that Congress had wide discretion in legislating for dependent locales and could treat each differently, lawmakers placed the Philippines and Puerto Rico on separate paths – a result that Degetau had unsuccessfully sought from all three branches of the federal government in 1900-1905. That January, Chairman Jones introduced a new Puerto Rico bill similar to its predecessor. Its basic contours still resembled those that Republican officials had previously proposed, and the bill retained the support of the President, the Governor of Puerto Rico, the Secretary of War, and Democratic sponsors in Congress. Unionistas now supported it as well, viewing it as the best achievable result. Eight months later, the federal political branches enacted legislation for the Philippines. That law resembled the one proposed for Puerto Rico in that it did not alleviate the colonial status of the people and places

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315 1914 HOUSE HEARINGS, supra note 79, at 53-54.
316 Id., at 7-8.
317 Id., at 53-54.
320 El Bill Jones, LA DEMOCRACIA, July 28, 1916, at 1; Copy, Interview with the Governor (Beckwith trans., 1916), MD NARA 350/5B/492/3377A-7, original printed in LA DEMOCRACIA, Feb. 5, 1916.
it touched.\textsuperscript{323} It differed from the Puerto Rico bill – which proposed to make Puerto Rico into a permanent U.S. territory and Puerto Ricans into U.S. citizens – by announcing U.S. support for eventual Filipino independence and declining to recognize Filipinos as U.S. citizens.\textsuperscript{324} As U.S. entry into the Great War loomed in early 1917, the Secretary of War – who was also a lawyer – nudged Congress into action on Puerto Rico, writing, “The whole moral dominance of the . . . United States in the American Mediterranean is involved in our treatment of the people of Porto Rico.”\textsuperscript{325} In March 1917, Jones’s bill became the duly enacted Jones Act.\textsuperscript{326}

Unequivocal recognition by the Supreme Court of the discretion of the political branches over Puerto Rican and Filipino status came later. Balzac \textit{v.} Porto Rico (1922) presented the question whether the Jones Act had incorporated Puerto Rico and thereby extended jury rights to Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{327} By this point, eight of the nine justices who had heard Downes \textit{v.} Bidwell (1901) were no longer on the Court.\textsuperscript{328} Speaking for all his brethren, Chief Justice William Howard Taft began by unequivocally embracing the territorial nonincorporation doctrine.\textsuperscript{329} He then acknowledged that justices’ prior explications of

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\item \textsuperscript{323} Id.; Jones Act (Puerto Rico), Pub. L. No. 368, 39 Stat. 951 (1917).
\item \textsuperscript{324} Jones Act (Philippines), Pub. L. No. 240, preamble, § 2, 39 Stat., at 545-46 (1916); Jones Act (Puerto Rico), Pub. L. No. 368, §§ 5, 39 Stat., at 953 (1917); supra note 316 and accompanying text; RIVERA RAMOS, supra note 13, at 147-48 (collecting sources).
\item \textsuperscript{325} Newton Baker to John Shafroth, Feb. 16, 1917, MD NARA 350/5B/489/3377; supra note 13; see also THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD WAR I, at 168 (Spencer C. Tucker ed., 2005).
\item \textsuperscript{326} Jones Act (Puerto Rico); cf. MARY L. DUDZIAK, COLD WAR CIVIL RIGHTS (2000) (advocating greater attention to the role of foreign relations in legal change); Derrick A. Bell, Jr., Comment, Brown \textit{v.} Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma, 93 HARV. L. REV. 518 (1980) (suggesting that legal change favorable to those with limited power often results from temporary convergences of their interests with those of more powerful decision makers).
\item \textsuperscript{327} 258 U.S. 298 (1922).
\item \textsuperscript{328} See SPARROW, supra note 13, at 197.
the nonincorporation doctrine had stated that statutory naturalization of a people generally also brought incorporation of their territory. Although the Court’s prior articulations of this principle had suggested that it applied prospectively – to statutory actions postdating the announcement of the territorial nonincorporation doctrine – he now intimated otherwise. Asserting that the subsequent “constant recurrence of the subject in the Houses of Congress[] fixed the attention of” legislators on the question, he announced that “incorporation is not to be assumed without express declaration, or an implication so strong as to exclude any other view.” Finding no such declaration or implication in the Jones Act of 1917, Taft announced for the Court that Puerto Rico – like the Philippines – remained unincorporated. The Constitution did not require jury trials there.

Three years later, the Court in Toyota v. United States addressed whether Filipinos were eligible to naturalize under federal statutes. Unlike in Balzac, where the justices expressly acknowledged and answered questions concerning the validity of the territorial
nonincorporation doctrine, the Toyota Court appeared to presume that the question left open by Gonzales – whether Puerto Ricans and by extension Filipinos were U.S. citizens – had already been answered in the negative. Reasoning that a federal law that permitted naturalization of “[p]ersons not citizens who owe permanent allegiance to the United States” did not encompass most Filipinos of color, the Court did not question that Filipinos would otherwise be eligible noncitizens.

More explicit Supreme Court recognition of the noncitizenship status of Filipinos followed decisions by elected officials and administrators to impose stringent immigration quotas on Filipinos in 1934, to strip Filipinos of their U.S. nationality upon Filipino independence in 1946, and to deport certain Filipinos as aliens thereafter. In 1954, the Court announced in response to a challenge to one such deportation in Barber v. Gonzales that though Filipinos were not aliens before 1946, “neither could they become United States citizens.”

The distinction in citizenship status between Puerto Ricans and Filipinos proved consequential for Puerto Ricans as well. Because the political branches made nearly all Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens in 1917, they continued and continue to enjoy the freedom to migrate within U.S. lands. Today, more U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent live outside the island than on it and Puerto Ricans on the mainland make up the second-largest group of Latinos there.

Reflecting on events a year after Toyota issued, Frederic Coudert described the Insular Cases as presenting the Supreme Court a choice between its “reverence for the Constitution” and allowing “the

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337 347 U.S. 637, 639 n.1.
United States properly to govern a people so alien.” These two conflicting desires, he told Columbia Law Review readers, “were reconciled by [an] ingenious and original doctrine.” Its key strength: its “very vagueness . . . was valuable.” Despite the ever-lengthening U.S. history of Puerto Rico, that analysis remains relevant. More than a century after annexation, the Court has specified few constitutional rights that Puerto Ricans – and other residents of unincorporated territories – lack.

Prior to mid-1905, Degetau had joined and at times influenced struggles over Constitution and empire that had changed the legal landscape and meanings of U.S. citizenship in uncertain ways. Working afterward and without Degetau in the shadow of these shifts – which included ambiguous Supreme Court doctrinal innovations – federal administrators and presidents together with elected Puerto Ricans and U.S. congressmen charted a rough course for Puerto Rico distinct from that enacted for the Philippines. Afterward, as the Supreme Court validated choices made by these nonjudicial actors, it added additional degrees of clarity to a legal landscape that nonetheless remained – as it remains – far from clear.

CONCLUSION

In Washington, Degetau had sought through legally infused arguments to bring administrators and eventually judges and elected officials – with their cacophony of existing views – into harmony behind this refrain: Puerto Rican receipt of U.S. citizenship, full

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339 Coudert, supra note 111, at 850, 828.
340 Id., at 850.
341 See infra notes 342, 357 and accompanying text.
342 Burnett, supra note 13, at 834-53 (arguing that as of 1922, the only doctrinal difference between the individual rights of residents of incorporated and unincorporated territories was that the latter – like states – did not have to use juries in local – as opposed to federal – courts); SPARROW, supra note 13, at 142-211 (similar); Cleveland, supra note 329, at 46-48 (similar); Gary Lawson & Robert D. Sloane, The Constitutionality of Decolonization by Associated Statehood: Puerto Rico’s Legal Status Reconsidered, 50 B.C. L. Rev. 1123, 1146 (2009) (extending the point forward in time). But cf. Downes, 182 U.S. 244 (1901) (upholding a tariff on shipments between Puerto Rico and New York despite the constitutional requirement of tariff uniformity within the United States).
constitutional protections, and eventual statehood. At once incisive and naïve, the vision captured key truths: U.S. officials held diverse views, shared commitments to law, and interacted with each other as they addressed Constitution and empire. But much more than Degetau grasped, they were also committed to facilitating what they perceived to be the exigencies of imperial governance. As a result, and contrary to Degetau’s expectations, the U.S. law of empire emerged slowly and ambiguously as U.S. officials acted tentatively and creatively – not clearly and conventionally – in responding to legal disputes over the status and rights of new U.S. acquisitions.

The U.S. officials whom Degetau joined in Washington were not of a single or certain mind as to the ramifications of empire. To varying degrees, he observed, they mixed together uncertainty over the constitutional flexibility that empire required; lingering commitments to the legal legacy of Reconstruction; depictions of the incapacity of colonized peoples; concerns that U.S. empire was illegitimate, unconstitutional, undemocratic, or illiberal; and doubts as to whether law should and other federal officials would uphold differential treatment of Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

Degetau and his interlocutors – despite disagreements and uncertainty as to the substantive dictates of law – broadly shared commitments to legal methods and institutions. As Degetau could see: Jurists, activists, politicians, and officials framed debates over U.S. empire in constitutional terms. Claims involving legal arguments proved to be effective tools with which to elicit governmental responses – albeit, often not the ones Degetau and other claimants desired – concerning constitutional underpinnings of empire. Lawyers and men with legal training occupied high posts within the federal government, and nearly every claim Degetau launched ended up on the desk of one of them. Socialized into legal culture and having secured their posts in part based on their legal acumen, many of these officials deployed their legal expertise as they sought authority and autonomy, acknowledged the supremacy of courts, and maneuvered to influence and insulate themselves from
judicial review.\textsuperscript{343} Justices, for their part, appeared committed to reconciling Constitution and empire. They proceeded tentatively, eschewing holdings that would impede imperial governance or declare it entirely and unequivocally constitutional.\textsuperscript{344} 

Amidst this complex landscape, Degetau had seen opportunities – for himself and the judges, administrators, and elected officials before whom he appeared – to shape the laws and policies of the U.S. empire-state.\textsuperscript{345} Yet, Degetau was unable to win official embrace of his constitutional contentions. As Degetau realized early in his tenure, his failures before the political branches in 1900-1905 partly arose because lawmakers – worried about retaining flexibility in imperial governance – acted in the shadow of courts. Concerned that embracing Puerto Ricans too fully would create precedents to which the Supreme Court might hold the political branches in governing ostensibly racially inferior Filipinos, lawmakers extended Puerto Ricans few rights, no U.S. citizenship or traditional territorial status, and little self-government in the Foraker Act (1900). Mostly, the Act left matters vague, depriving Degetau of potential test cases. It also framed a test case on a taxing issue that could be decided narrowly, raising the possibility of a loss for the government that would not be

\textsuperscript{343} On deploying legal expertise to secure authority and autonomy, see, for example, Daniel R. Ernst, Lawyers, Bureaucratic Autonomy, and Securities Regulation During the New Deal, Georgetown Public Law Research Paper No. 1470934, http://ssrn.com/abstract=1470934 (2009). On judicial supremacy over constitutional meaning as the result of a slow process that remained far from complete at the turn of the last century, see Whittington, supra note 15; Micalozzo, supra note 77, at 4, 81-83, 123, 150; Desai, supra note 18.

\textsuperscript{344} Cf. Reuel E. Schiller, The Era of Deference: Courts, Expertise, and the Emergence of New Deal Administrative Law, 106 Mich. L. Rev. 399 (2007) (describing justices’ perceptions that courts lacked the institutional skills to second-guess agencies productively). On judges as feeling at least somewhat bound by law, see, for example, Duncan Kennedy, Toward an Historical Understanding of Legal Consciousness: The Case of Classical Legal Thought in America, 1850-1940, 3 Res. L. & Soc. 3, 6, 23-24 (1980); Howard Gillman, The Constitution besieged 16-18 (1993); Peter Karsten, Heart versus Head (1997). On judges as committed to the norms of legal communities, see, for example, Laurence Baum, Judges and Their Audiences (2006); Whittington, supra note 7.

\textsuperscript{345} Keck, supra note 7, at 517, 532 (noting judicial autonomy where dominant regimes are divided on an issue); Frymer, supra note 7, at 782, 787-91 (arguing that courts play active roles in shaping and constructing state power, that the lawyers who appear before courts are institutionally situated to influence them, and that the power of courts derives in part from divisions within dominant political regimes); Joondeh, supra note 7, at 366-70; Reuel E. Schiller, Enlarging the Administrative Polity: Administrative Law and the Changing Definition of Pluralism, 1945-1970, 53 Vand. L. Rev. 1389 (2000); supra notes 8-10, 94, 96, 127, 130, 313-314, 343-344.
devastating. It simultaneously reduced the likelihood of such a loss by altering the official landscape so that a ruling for the government on the tax issue would also be a decision to decline to impede already-underway imperial governance. When Degetau threatened to bring a test case seeking a passport that designated him a U.S. citizen, lawmakers mooted such claims by conceding to U.S. insular residents the access to passports and consular protections that Degetau sought.

With Congress largely closed to him, Degetau turned to administrative authorities and then to courts. Both, he knew, played roles in imperial governance and in giving shape to the law of empire. Both found it profitable to decline to provide the clarifications that Degetau sought.

Nonetheless, Degetau persevered in revering law and adjudication. During four years in Washington, he had approached judges – and to a lesser degree administrators acting in adjudicatory capacities – as though they would rush in where other federal officials feared to tread: answering properly presented claims, standing aloof from political controversies, and fully implementing legal principles. Afterward, he maintained his faith.

It is tempting to dismiss Degetau’s judicial orientation as self-promotion or the delusion of one subject to the siren call of law. But Degetau’s claims – especially those before administrators and judges – won his countrymen gains, including nonalienage, passports, a voice on the floor of the House of Representatives, free migration throughout U.S. lands, and access to federal civil-service and navy-yard jobs. When Degetau’s successors turned to more political strategies, a dozen years of work secured for them only a modest liberalization of U.S. rule.

346 See supra note 126; Whittington, supra note 7, at 608, 613, 621-23; BAUM, supra note 344.
347 Cf. ROSENBERG, supra note 313, at 341 (“[C]ourts act as ‘fly-paper’ for social reformers who succumb to the ‘lure of litigation.’”).
348 Cf. Silverstein, supra note 16, at 1087 (arguing that while recourse to courts is dangerous for those who have political pathways to achieving their policy preferences, it is sensible for those lacking such options). For other gains that Degetau won, see Erman, supra note 15, at 77-195.
Degetau achieved what he did in part by viewing administrators as potential agents of constitutional change. In some cases, they sought out this mantle, as when law officers within the War Department Charles Magoon and Felix Frankfurter influentially proposed legal theories of empire to the U.S. political and judicial branches. In other cases, administrators had opportunities to create persuasive precedents, showcase avoidance strategies, or provide bases for test cases as they responded to properly presented controversies of constitutional moment.

One such controversy gave rise to Gonzales v. Williams (1904), which laid foundation for recognition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens. In avoiding the question of Puerto Ricans’ U.S. citizenship by ruling for Gonzalez solely on the basis of her non-alienage, the Court embraced and modeled evasion by concession. Over time, administrators, lawmakers, and judges’ iterative use of the approach delinked U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans from numerous rights and thereby reduced for them the distance between citizenship and nationality. Doing so lowered the stakes of naturalization. By signaling its reluctance to declare Puerto Ricans and Filipinos to be U.S. citizens, the Gonzales Court also transformed that question – for practical purposes – from a judicial to a political one.

This reinterpretation of Gonzales points the way to a new understanding of the 1901-1925 Insular Cases. Partly based on White’s opinion, existing accounts have identified Downes v. Bidwell (1901) as the most important Insular Case. Scholars have variously portrayed the case as denying recently acquired U.S. lands and peoples an array of constitutional rights, eventual statehood, or

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350 182 U.S. 244 (1901).
351 See, e.g., Vignarajah, supra note 78, at 789; Sparrow, supra note 13, at 79-110.
352 See. e.g., Burnett, supra note 13, at 800-01, 805-09, 820-21 (listing sources); Kent, supra note 329, at 108-09; Jasmine B. Gonzales Rose, The Exclusion of Non-English-Speaking Jurors: Remediying a Century of Denial of the Sixth Amendment in the Federal Courts of Puerto Rico, 46 Harv. C.R.-C.L. L. Rev. 497, 511, 513-14 (2011); Saikrishna Prakash, Against Tribal Fungibility, 89 Cornell L. Rev. 1069, 1091 (2004). Krishanti Vignarajah seems to agree with this interpretation when she argues that in the 1901 Insular Cases “the Court endorsed Congress’s authority to govern Puerto Rico as a satellite colony, formally validating the territory’s hybrid status somewhere between foreign nation and domestic state.” Supra note 78, at 790.
immunity from potential deannexation. But *Downes* had no majority opinion; the Court unequivocally embraced the nonincorporation doctrine only after more than two decades; it today remains unclear what constitutional rights residents of unincorporated territories lack; and it is hard to imagine the Court ever insisting that incorporated territories either become states or remain within the Union.

Extant treatments also tend to downplay the arguably clearest holding from the *Insular Cases* – that those born in unincorporated territories do not enjoy 14th Amendment birthright citizenship – a result that the Court reached by building on *Gonzales* rather than *Downes*. That rule proved consequential for Filipinos, who lost their U.S. nationality by the millions following Filipino independence, and for those born in Puerto Rico, who learned that their U.S. citizenship arose by operation of statute rather than as a constitutional guarantee.

More important than differences between *Gonzales* and *Downes* are their similarities. In 1898 but not in 1917, many U.S. commentators and officials along with some leading Puerto Rican

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353 See, e.g., Burnett, supra note 13, at 800-01 (listing sources); Christina Duffy Burnett & Burke Marshall, Between the Foreign and the Domestic: The Doctrine of Territorial Incorporation, Invented and Reinvented, in FOREIGN IN A DOMESTIC SENSE, supra note 13, at 1, 2; SPARROW, supra note 13, at 250; Lawson & Sloane, supra note 342, at 1145; Edward C. Carter, III, The Extra-Territorial Reach of the Privilege against Self-Incrimination or Does the Privilege “Follow the Flag?” 25 S. Ill. U. L.J. 313, 320 (2001).

354 Burnett, supra note 13; SPARROW, supra note 13, at 238-40, 247, 251.

355 *Downes*, 182 U.S. 244 (1901).

356 See supra note 329.

357 See supra note 342.

358 See supra note 342.

359 See CONST., Art. IV, § 3.

360 See Allan Erbsen, Constitutional Spaces, 95 MINN. L. REV. 1168, 1201 n.122 (2011) (citing Jones v. United States, 137 U.S. 202, 212 (1890) as authority for deannexation being a political question); cf. Rivera v. Congress, 338 F. Supp. 2d 272, 279 (D.P.R. 2004) (citing political-question doctrine in finding no judicial authority to mandate independence for Puerto Rico while presuming Congress has such authority); Colon v. United States Dep’t of State, 2 F. Supp. 2d 43, 46 (similar); Burnett, supra note 13, at 864-70 (suggesting that controversy surrounded the question of deannexation in the immediate aftermath of U.S. annexation of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines by citing Justice Edward White’s writings as authority both for the possibility and potential impossibility of deannexation while also noting that most commentators believed deannexation to be unproblematic).

political men equated U.S. annexation with immediate extension of U.S. citizenship, eventual statehood, and full constitutional protections.\textsuperscript{361} Examining \textit{Downes} and \textit{Gonzales} together suggests that the Court may have driven that legal change in conjunction with lawmakers, administrators, and the president through doctrinal creativity, ambiguity, and tentativeness.\textsuperscript{362} In \textit{Downes}, Justice White proposed the territorial nonincorporation doctrine under which affected territories received no promise of statehood and their residents received only fundamental constitutional rights. As contemporaries noted, the reach of the opinion was doubly ambiguous, for it neither enjoyed majority support nor provided detail on how to categorize constitutional rights.\textsuperscript{363}

\textit{Gonzales}, although a unanimous decision, also rested on judicial creativity and ambiguity. Its decision to recognize Puerto Ricans’ nonalienage while reserving the question of their U.S. citizenship only made sense as a result of the Court’s implicit contemplation of the novel status of the noncitizen U.S. national.

Operationalization of the \textit{Downes} and \textit{Gonzales} innovations first came from outside the courts. After War Department Law Officer Felix Frankfurter told lawmakers that they could extend or withhold U.S. citizenship on terms of their choosing, the political branches made Puerto Ricans and not Filipinos U.S. citizens. Only in the 1920s did the Court recognize the result, proclaiming the nonincorporation doctrine, delinking U.S. citizenship from eventual statehood and full constitutional rights, and indicating that U.S.-national Filipinos lacked U.S. citizenship.

It should perhaps not be surprising that the \textit{Downes} and \textit{Gonzales} innovations first came from outside the courts. After War Department Law Officer Felix Frankfurter told lawmakers that they could extend or withhold U.S. citizenship on terms of their choosing, the political branches made Puerto Ricans and not Filipinos U.S. citizens. Only in the 1920s did the Court recognize the result, proclaiming the nonincorporation doctrine, delinking U.S. citizenship from eventual statehood and full constitutional rights, and indicating that U.S.-national Filipinos lacked U.S. citizenship.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{361} See Erman, supra note 15, at 7-8.
\item \textsuperscript{362} Rather than ask how judicial legal analysis differs from that by others in the state, see, e.g., Graber, supra note 96, at 35; Keck, supra note 7, at 532; Whittington, supra note 7, at 608; cf. Joondeh, supra note 7 (cataloging potential lines between law and politics), this observation opens the way to investigations of how courts, elected officials, and administrators develop law in conjunction, see, e.g., Silverstein, supra note 16, at 1089; cf. Keck, supra note 7, at 513 (criticizing consumers of Regime Theory for too often presuming that courts always act in subordination to political actors); Whittington, supra note 7 (stressing ways that courts are one institution among others in the U.S. state); Vignarajah, supra note 78 (similar); Mark A. Graber, \textit{Dred Scott as a Centrist Decision}, 83 N.C. L. Rev. 1229, 1241 (2005) (similar); Joondeh, supra, at 378-79 (similar).
\item \textsuperscript{363} See, e.g., supra note 104.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
innovations were not embraced unequivocally by the Court for more than two decades – and until after the political branches and the administrative department responsible for administering Puerto Rico had signaled their approval of both. U.S. acquisitions of Hawai‘i, Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico sparked roiling U.S. debates over the desirability, constitutionality, and significance of imperialism. U.S. officials from across the U.S. state, Degetau discovered, managed the competing commitments, uncertainty, and potential opposition that resulted by proceeding tentatively along similar tracks. Although the details of this process are beyond the scope of this paper, observing the early Insular Cases and the dynamics in which they were enmeshed from Degetau’s vantage does bring its broad contours into relief. The constitutional law of empire emerged iteratively as judges, administrators, and elected officials each influenced, deferred to, and reinforced the innovations of the others. Throughout, they deployed forms of creative ambiguity to manage – and eventually settle – perceived conflicts between Constitution and empire.

APPENDIX: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG/DE/SPR/COS Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo del Departamento de Estado, Sección del Secretario de Puerto Rico, Serie del Correspondencia Oficina del Secretario

CDO:_ El Centro de Documentación Obrera Santiago Iglesias Pantín, Microfilm Collection, Roll

CIHCAM _/_/ Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Colección Angel M. Mergal, caja, cartapacio, documento

CIHCAM _/L_ Centro de Investigaciones Históricas,

364 BEISNER, supra note 35, at 221.

365 On changes to law occurring without necessarily producing corresponding holdings, see, for example, Whittington, supra note 7, at 621. Among the many works advocating or undertaking such approaches like that suggested here, see Whittington, supra, at 621. Cf. supra note 10.
Colección Angel M. Mergal, caja, libro

DC NARA 85/__/__/ District of Columbia National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 85, Entry, Volume number out of total number of volumes, Page, No.

MD NARA, 350/__/__ Maryland National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 350, Series, Box, File

WWP, NYPL /__ William Williams Papers, New York Public Library, Box, Folder