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Leon Blohm

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Freie Universität Berlin
Global Histories: A Student Journal
Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
Koserstraße 20
14195 Berlin

Contact information:
For more information, please consult our website www.globalhistories.com or contact the editor at: admin@globalhistories.com.

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ABSTRACT

In German colonialism, the rule of colonial difference aimed to establish a racial distinction between the colonizers and the colonized, thereby legitimizing and stabilizing colonial rule. Previous research has predominantly examined this phenomenon in the context of mixed marriages. However, this paper explores a different perspective by analyzing how the native police in German-Samoa collided with the rule of colonial difference and contemporary notions of what has been described in the literature as "salvage colonialism." As a key component of the exploitation system in the racially segregated colony, the somewhat autonomous native law enforcement system was inevitably bound to interact with racial conflicts. This paper argues that this rather unique institution within German colonialism operated as an instrument of colonial rule and simultaneously posed a threat to the racial hierarchization within and beyond the Pacific colony. Discussing the Samoan police as a specific challenge for the rule of colonial difference can therefore serve as an analytical probe to flesh out the internal, practical, and ideological contradictions within German colonialism.

BY

Leon Blohm

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leon Blohm holds a BA in History and Philosophy from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where he also co-founded the student journal Die junge Mommsen. After stints at the University of Edinburgh and National Taiwan University, he is currently completing his MA in Global History at Freie Universität Berlin. His research focuses are the history of German colonialism in China and the Pacific, as well as (post)colonial migration history. He is currently preparing a research project on migrant anticolonialism in Berlin during the Weimar Republic.

The German colonial administration in Samoa (1900–1914) pursued a violent divide-and-rule strategy to exploit and control the profits of the islands' plantation economy. To this end, Samoans along with imported Melanesian and Chinese laborers were racially segregated from one another to prevent cross-racial solidarity.[1] For the important disciplinary component of this system, which frequently included flogging and solitary confinement, the colonial administration relied heavily on the use of Samoan policemen, supervised only by a German chief of police and, later, a few German assistants.[2] In a racially segregated colony, however, the somewhat autonomous native law enforcement system was inevitably bound to interact with racial conflicts. Moreover, the special position of native policemen as law enforcers potentially threatened the racial hierarchy of the colony and in the German Empire as a whole, especially when police officers used force against white planters.

The German "rule of colonial difference" aimed at a racial demarcation between colonizers and colonized to legitimize and stabilize colonial rule.[3] The most prominent challenges to racial segregation were intermarriages and the children born of interracial unions, often called "half-casts," which have received much attention by researchers of German colonialism to date.[4] In recent years, there has also been a growing research interest in the category of local intermediaries, who were often indigenous people on whom the colonial state relied, such as translators. Linked to the figure of the frontiersman in the

1 Holger Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism: Workers and the Globalization of Samoa* (Harvard University Press, 2022), 169.

2 Hermann Joseph Hiery, "Die Polizei im deutschen Samoa: Deutsche Hoffnungen und samoanische Erwartungen," in *Barrieren und Zugänge: Die Geschichte der europäischen Expansion. Festschrift für Eberhard Schmitt zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Thomas Beck (Harrassowitz, 2004), 270.

3 Frank Becker, "Einleitung: Kolonialherrschaft und Rassenpolitik," in *Rassenmischehen, Mischlinge, Rassentrennung: Zur Politik der Rasse im deutschen Kolonialreich*, ed. Frank Becker, *Beiträge zur Europäischen Überseegeschichte*, Bd. 90 (Steiner, 2004), 14. The "rule of colonial difference" as a concept was first coined by Partha Chatterjee for the context of British colonialism in India. As a central concern of colonial discourse across empires, it is useful to utilize the concept to shed light on the demarcation between colonizer and colonized regarding German colonialism and Samoa. Partha Chatterjee, "The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories," *Princeton Studies in Culture, Power, History* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 16. For a utilization of this concept to the German empire see Minu Haschemi Yekani, *Koloniale Arbeit: Rassismus, Migration und Herrschaft in Tansania (1885-1914)* (Campus Verlag, 2019), 18.

4 For the discussion on "intermarriage" and "half-casts" in the context of Samoa Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Samoan Women's Revolt: Race, Intermarriage and Imperial Hierarchy in German Samoa," *German History* 35, no. 2 (2017): 206–28, also Roland Samulski, "Die ‚Sünde' im Auge des Betrachters: Rassenmischung und deutsche Rassenpolitik im Schutzgebiet Samoa 1900 bis 1914," in *Rassenmischehen, Mischlinge, Rassentrennung: Zur Politik der Rasse im deutschen Kolonialreich*, ed. Frank Becker*, Beiträge zur Europäischen Überseegeschichte,* Bd. 90 (Steiner, 2004); Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Threat of 'Woolly-Haired Grandchildren:' Race, the Colonial Family and German Nationalism," in "The Domestic Frontier: European Colonialism, Nationalism and the Family," *The History of the Family*, 14, no. 4 (October 26, 2009): 356–68.

European imagination, their existence "in between" blurred the boundary between colonizer and colonized.[5] Unlike translators, however, the specific challenge posed by indigenous police officers to the rule of colonial difference has hardly been considered in this discussion so far.

In historical research on German colonialism, which has tended to neglect the Pacific in comparison to other German colonies,[6] the studies on the Samoan police can be counted on one hand. The only more detailed discussion of the interaction of Samoan policemen with the underlying system of racial segregation in Samoa was recently presented by Holger Droessler.[7] His approach of analyzing the policemen's practices in relation to the underlying racial conflicts in Samoa is useful in contextualizing the deployment of native policemen as an instrument of colonial rule. However, Droessler is not interested in linking the police's entanglement in Samoa's social hierarchy to broader colonial discourses about racial hierarchies in the German Empire.[8]

This paper therefore examines how the Samoan policemen operated as an instrument of colonial rule and in what ways this institution then posed a challenge to the racialized social hierarchy of German colonialism within and beyond Samoa as a result.[9] Discussing the Samoan police as a specific problem for the social order in Samoa can thus contribute to a better understanding of the German ambitions for colonial domination and exploitation in Samoa. At the same time, the interaction between colonial discourse and the practices of this unique institution of indigenous law enforcement in German colonialism can serve as an analytical probe for the study of racist fear fantasies in the multi-ethnic German Empire.

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5 Ulrike Schaper, "David Meetom: Interpreting, Power and the Risks of Intermediation in the Initial Phase of German Colonial Rule in Cameroon," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44, no. 5 (2016): 752–76.

6 Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (C.H. Beck, 2019), 10.

7 Droessler focuses more on the similar native police force in East-Samoa under US-dominion, although he also addresses German-Samoa. Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 165–70.

8 Following Edward Said's approach to Orientalism as discourse, colonial and racial "discourse" is understood here in a broad sense, not limited to a particular group of professionals or intellectuals, but rather defined by its openness to a wide range of actors who had the power to influence the discourse. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Routledge, 1978). For the utilization of Said's Orientalism paradigm in the context of Samoa, George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 24.

9 The plea for an integrative research approach that analyzes colony and metropole as a whole was initially made by Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (University of California Press, 1997).

The article is divided into two parts. First, the establishment of the two different police institutions, the *leoleo* and *fitafita*, will be contextualized in a wider discussion about German rule in Samoa as "salvage colonialism." Second, the delicate enforcement of German authority by Samoan policemen will be examined in different selected cases, ranging from the punishment of workers up to the arrest of white planters. The study draws on material from German archives, printed sources and selected newspaper articles from both the metropolis and the island colony.

Native Policy and Native Police

Wilhelm Solf, the former chairman of the German-British-American tridominion prior to 1900 in Samoa, and first Governor of the Pacific colony from the official beginning of German colonial rule in 1900, proudly presented his colonial government as a protector of indigenous rights and traditions.[10] In 1901, Solf declared to a group of Samoans that the German government wishes them not to be ruled, "according to white man's ideas [sic], but according to the Faa Samoa,"[11] the Samoan custom. Erich Schultz-Ewerth, Solf's protégé and successor, described the German rule as the, "preservation of the Samoan's customs and mores and their peculiar character per se."[12] This approach was related to contemporary observations of declining populations of so called *Naturvölker* throughout the Pacific. In colonial discourse, *Naturvölker*, as in the case of the Samoans, were usually understood as "still" living in a state of nature and whose existence was now becoming endangered through contact with modernity brought to them by *Kulturvölker*, like the Germans.[13] The idea of "salvaging" the Samoan people and their culture through colonial rule from this looming path to extinction had already been raised by some German writers in the proto-colonial era,[14] such as Augustin Krämer, who had idealized

10 For an overview of Solf's rule as governor in Samoa. Eberhard von Vietsch, *Wilhelm Solf: Botschafter Zwischen Den Zeiten* (Wunderlich, 1961), 59–102.

11 "Savai'i Fono, Minutes of Fono Held in Savai'i during Malaga," July 1901, BA Berlin, R 1001/3061, 57. Like in most communication with Samoans, Solf held the speech in English.

12 Schulz to Osbahr, March 8 1914, NZNA AGCA VI 28, 61, as cited in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 319.

13 Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 32. For an extensive overview of the terms "Naturvolk" and "Kulturvolk," see Klaus Grotsch, "Naturvölker/Kulturvölker," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie online* (Schwabe Verlag, 2017), https://doi.org/10.24894/HWPh.2703.

14 "Proto-colonial" refers to the time period since when Euro-American colonizers where encroaching Samoa, but before it got the official status of a colony in 1900. Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 324.

his exoticizing perception of Samoan culture during his travels to the islands.[15] To describe this specific colonial ideology and practice of rule, the historian George Steinmetz has coined the analytical term "salvage colonialism," which has often been used in historical research on Samoa since its introduction.[16]

Solf's approach of salvage colonialism had substantial consequences that produced a distinct native policy in Samoa compared to other German.[17] One of Solf's first actions as governor was to repatriate the exiled Mata'afa Josepho, who had fought against the German-supported faction during the proto-colonial era,[18] and inaugurate him as *ali'i sili* (often translated as "paramount chief") of Samoa. However, he was forbidden to hold the title of *tupu* (often translated as "king"). In addition, unlike in most other German colonies, Solf refrained from imposing forced labor on Samoans and strictly prohibited the use of flogging against them.[19]

In contrast with the more violent policy toward natives in other colonies, the native policy in Samoa has therefore led some historians to interpret it as simple preservationism, taking the contemporary rhetoric of salvage colonialism at face value.[20] This interpretation may underestimate the colonial hierarchy that Solf aimed to establish—not despite his concessions to *fa'a Samoa*, but through them. By seizing control over which benign traditions could remain intact, which were to be modified or reinterpreted, and which, like the title of *tupu*, were to be abolished altogether, Solf created a system of

15 Augustin Krämer, *Hawaii, Ostmikronesien und Samoa: Meine zweite Südseereise (1897-1899) zum Studium der Atolle und ihrer Bewohner* (Strecker & Schröder, 1906); Augustin Krämer, *Die Samoa-Inseln: Entwurf einer Monographie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Deutsch-Samoas* (Schweizerbart, 1902); also Otto E. Ehlers, *Samoa, die Perle der Südsee* (Paetel, 1895).

16 George Steinmetz, "The Uncontrollable Afterlives of Ethnography: Lessons from 'Salvage Colonialism' in the German Overseas Empire," *Ethnography* 5, no. 3 (2004): 264.

17 Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 321.

18 Hempenstall, *Pacific Islanders Under German Rule*, 17f.

19 For a detailed discussion of Solf's concessions toward Samoan traditions and the meaning of certain titles, Ibid., 319–30.

20 The most prominent advocate of this branch of research is the German historian Hermann Hiery. For his interpretation as preservationist especially Hermann Joseph Hiery, *Das Deutsche Reich in Der Südsee: (1900-1921). Eine Annäherung an Die Erfahrungen Verschiedener Kulturen* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 312. In that book, Hiery follows the typical practice of colonial ethnographers to start with geography, flora and fauna before turning to humans. Ibid., 5. Also Hermann Joseph Hiery, ed., *Die deutsche Südsee: 1884-1914: Ein Handbuch* (Schöningh, 2001); Horst Gründer and Hermann Joseph Hiery, *Die Deutschen und ihre Kolonien: Ein Überblick*, 3rd ed. (be.bra Verlag, 2022), 112. John Moses comes to a similar conclusion, precisely that the colonial officials, "had determined that Samoa was to be administered primarily for Samoans, not the planters and traders." John A. Moses, "The Coolie Labour Question and German Colonial Policy in Samoa, 1900–1914," *The Journal of Pacific History* 8, no. 1 (1973): 101. For an early critic of this interpretation see Corinna Erckenbrecht, "Die Wissenschaftliche Aufarbeitung Der Deutschen Kolonialzeit in Der Südsee. Kritische Bemerkungen Zum Handbuch 'Die Deutsche Südsee, 1884–1914,'" *Anthropos* 97, no. 1 (2002): 163–79.

rule that promised less resistance and more authority than the more violent and weaponized colonial rule of his "predecessors" in the proto-colonial era.

In a more recent approach, the historian George Steinmetz has outlined a multilayered account of native policy in Samoa, placing its practices on an axis between "regulated custom" and "colonialism nonetheless."[21] However, by highlighting the ways in which the colonial government used traditionalism, sometimes with inventive ingenuity,[22] as a means of its own rule, Steinmetz's differentiation of salvage colonialism still discusses the degree to which this ideology was actually implemented in reality. In accordance with the aims of this study, namely examining the reciprocal effects between native police and racial hierarchy in colonial Samoa, salvage colonialism is more useful as necessary historical context when returning to the level of sources, even though the term itself was never used by contemporaries. In this way, it is not primarily seen as a possible interpretation or even normative judgment of native policy by the historian, but rather as a very central contemporary concept of thought, an idealized version of the actual rule in the minds of many different historical actors, which was used to make sense of, approve of, or resist the specific form of colonial rule in Samoa.

Contemporary references to Solf's policy as salvage colonialism in all their nuances are particularly central and useful for contextualization for two reasons: first, the integration of native policemen into colonial rule was inextricably linked to the general interpretation of Solf's government style as concessive towards the Samoans in accounts by historical actors; second, the underlying discursive juxtaposition of *Naturvölker* versus *Kulturvölker,* with the "salvation" of the Samoan "noble savage"[23] as a goal of colonization, contained a powerful differentiation of racialized groups in Samoa that deeply affected the practices of native policemen and could also be instrumentalized by others to protest against them.

21 Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 322. Recently, Matthew P. Fitzpatrick even tried to completely overturn the interpretation of Samoa as a comparatively peaceful colony and to point out the oppressive character of the colonial administration as having a high, though dormant potential for violence. According to him, the extent of anti-colonial resistance, particularly among the youth in Samoa, has also been underestimated so far. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "'Renegade' Resistance and Colonial Rule in German Samoa," *The Journal of Pacific History* 58, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 325–47.

22 At least a certain amount of *lavalavas,* the "traditional" Samoan clothing, was manufactured in Germany. See also, Solf to Hunter, Apia, July 20, 1900, in Arthur J. Knoll, ed., *The German Colonial Experience: Select Documents on German Rule in Africa, China, and the Pacific 1884 - 1914* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2010), 89f.

23 A good example of the construction of the "noble savage" or *Edler Wilder* in the case of Samoa is Franz Albert, *Mataafa, der Held von Samoa* (Kreuz und Charitas, 1906).

The German colonial administration did not establish a *Schutztruppe* (colonial troops) in any of the Pacific colonies, nor did it station a regular marines corps permanently in those territories. Only in New Guinea and in other parts of Melanesia and Micronesia under German colonial control was there a larger number of so-called police-soldiers, who were frequently deployed for punitive and sometimes deadly expeditions.[24]

Initially, Samoa had only a small native police force (*leoleo*) stationed in Apia under the command of police officer Hugo Dietrich. As part of Solf's efforts to pacify the once armed conflicts on the islands, one of his first actions in office was to buy up all firearms owned by Samoans.[25] The few native policemen, who had been cautiously rearmed under German command between 1900 and 1914, were considered sufficient to maintain law and order in the colony.[26] In 1902, out of a budget for ten regular native policemen, only seven men were named on the payroll.[27] Apart from the enforcement of law in the colony against criminal offenses and misdemeanors, one of the most important tasks of the *leoleo* was to guard the prison in Apia.[28] As a condition of their appointment, they had to be fluent in English, which still remained the lingua franca in Samoa. They also had to pledge obedience to a code of conduct that reflected the administration's anxiety about potential conflicts, regulating that: "When dealing with the public, police officers are to behave in a courteous manner and avoid harshness that is not necessary for maintaining authority."[29] Often confused or equated with the *leoleo* in historiography, the *fitafita* were an altogether different native police corp.[30]

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24 Heinrich Schnee, *Bilder aus der Südsee: Unter den kannibalischen Stämmen des Bismarck-Archipels* (Reimer, 1904), 57. For a detailed report of several punishment expeditions using native police-soldiers in Melanesia, Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg, *Samoa, Bismarckarchipel und Neuguinea: Drei deutsche Kolonien in der Südsee* (Weber, 1902).

25 Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 339.

26 However, this did not mean that concerns about the outbreak of violent uprisings within the colonial administration were over. However, in view of the military inferiority of the few German colonialists in Samoa in such a situation, Solf and his successor Schultz were determined to prevent violence before it broke out as much as possible.

27 The names were Nimo, Tatopau, Lotoma, Toloai, Malati, Laumatia, and Papalii. Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 265.

28 Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 268.

29 Geschäftsanweisung für den Poizeivorsteher und Polizeiassistenten, Apia, 01.08.1903, cited after: Ibid. If not said otherwise, all quotes are translated by the author. Original: "*Im Verkehr mit dem Publikum haben sich die Polizeibeamten eines höflichen Verhaltens zu befleissigen und Härten, die zur Aufrechterhaltung der Autorität nicht nothwendig sind, zu vermeiden*."

30 Steinmetz speaks only of a "handful of native policemen (fitafitas)" and does not mention the *leoleo* at any point in his book on native policy. Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 328. Hiery correctly distinguishes the *leoleo* and *fitafita* in his article on police in Samoa from 2004. In his handbook published earlier in 2001 however, he misinterpreted the *fitafita* as *the* police in Samoa and sees the *leoleo* only as a mere *Dorfgendarm.* Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa;" Hiery, *Die deutsche Südsee*, 654.

Although Mata'afa agreed to cooperate with the colonial government in 1900, his attitude toward German rule remained ambiguous. He always sought to use what might be called an "agency in tight corners" to expand Samoan influence within the administration.[31] As early as 1900, he tried to persuade Solf to establish his own honor guard, which would be equivalent to his new position as *ali'i sili.* As a compromise, Solf agreed to establish such a corps, called *fitafita* (lit. "soldier"), but as a guard in his own service.[32] Of the 52 men hand-picked by Mata'faa to represent the districts of Samoa, 30 were eventually certified by government physician Bernhard Funk as meeting the requirements to join the *fitafita*. They were mostly sons of high-ranking *matai* and/or often so called "half-casts,"[33] children of both Samoan and European descent.[34] After their official inauguration on December 1, 1900, they received free rations and a salary of five dollars per month with the possibility of promotion.[35] Hermann Eckenweber was appointed as head of the corps or *taitai fitafita*, with the Samoan Tuaifaiva as sergeant.[36] Unlike the *leoleo*, the *fitafita* had de-jure no authority to enforce law, although de-facto they were often called for support by planters and colonial officers to discipline workers. The only regular duty officially assigned to them other than guarding was to deliver important mail. Other forms of physical labor were not assigned to them out of respect for their high status in Samoan society.[37] Despite the differences between *leoleo* and *fitafita* in form and practice, their institutions were informally linked. New *leoleo* members were usually recruited from among the *fitafita*, who had already worked with the German administration for several years and had proven themselves to be loyal, fluent in English, and trustworthy enough to become law enforcers. In this way, the *fitafita* served like a recruitment office for the *leoleo*, who thus shared a similar social structure of high-ranking Samoans.[38]

31 The phrase "agency in tight corners" is borrowed from John Lonsdale, "Editorial: Agency in Tight Corners: Narrative and Initiative in African History," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2000): 6.

32 Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 269.

33 German sources sometimes referred to children of both Samoan and Euro-American ancestry as "Mischlinge," but more often used the English term.

34 German planter Fanz Reinecke also refers to policemen as "meist Halfcasts." Franz Reinecke, *Über die Nutzpflanzen Samoas und ihre Verwendung: Sitzung der Section für Obst- und Gartenbau vom 23. September 1895* (Barth, 1903), 251.

35 For their uniforms, Solf chose an almost identical outfit to that the British used for their colonial troops in Fiji. See also Thomas Morlang, *Askari Und Fitafita: "Farbige" Söldner in Den Deutschen Kolonien* (Christoph Links Verlag, 2008), 129.

36 *Das deutsche Schutzgebiet Samoa: Allgemeine Auskunft und Adressbuch 1903* (Apia: Luebke, 1903), 17, http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/9020409.

37 Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 270. For the use of *fitafita* to discipline workers see chapter 2.1.

38 Ibid., 271.

In 1901, Mata'afa, who wanted the *fitafita* to become a unit capable of serving as a military force, called for Solf to expand the corps to 100 men, but his demands fell on deaf ears, ostensibly for cost reasons. Confidentially, Solf and other German officials worried about the potential danger of such a force to German rule, with one eye on the uncertainty that could follow the death of the loyal but aging Mata'afa.[39] Nonetheless, the *fitafita* were considered a very useful and reliable vehicle for native policy. In 1909, Vice-Admiral Carl von Coerper, head of the East Asia Squadron, wrote euphorically to the emperor:

> They have developed an excellent esprit de corps, and their military bearing, zeal for duty, and conduct are impeccable. The Fita-Fita troop is one of the best means of popularizing Germanness [*Deutschtum*]; it helps better than anything else to familiarize the youth with the German spirit and accustom them to fulfilling their duties.[40]

In view of their alleged deep integration within the traditional web of meaning in Samoa, Hiery has interpreted the *fitafita* as a "sanctuary" for the "traditional, hierarchically structured, and oligarchic-male-shaped Samoa."[41] However, the quote by Coerper reflects the ambiguity of native policy, caught between the rhetoric of salvage colonialism as a concession to Samoan tradition and the strategic use of "traditionalism" as a tool in this case to spread "Germanness" in the world. The latter aim was not to be achieved by leaving traditions untouched, but on the contrary, by educating and transforming Samoans according to German interests. I argue, therefore, that the *fitafita* should be seen less as a kind of "sanctuary" for tradition than as an institutional tool of native policy designed to mediate its desired transformative effects on Samoan culture. In the context of this function, the behaviour and physical appearance of the police corps was symbolically charged, which exemplified the potential reach of this strategy within certain "racial limits." To what extent were Samoans deemed to be transformable? Lieutenant Reisner, who commanded the corps for a time, noted in a memorandum:

> Tall and well-built, the Samoan has the appearance of a strapping, muscular soldier of whom the 1st Guard Regiment would not have to be ashamed of. […] It is a pleasure to be able to observe these neat brown sons of the South Seas in their service [...]. The intelligence of the Samoan, which in my

39 During the uprising lead by Lauaki in 1909, Solf ordered the German police commissioner to secretly remove all firing pins from *fitafita* rifles. Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 167.

40 "Carl von Coeper to Wilhelm II," May 16, 1909, BA Berlin, R 1001/2673, 38. Original: "Es hat sich bei ihnen ein ausgezeichneter Korpsgeist herausgebildet, ihre militärische Haltung, ihr Diensteifer und ihr Benehmen sind tadellos. Die Fita-Fita Truppe ist eins der besten Mittel zur Popularisierung des Deutschtums, sie hilft besser als irgend etwas anderes, die heranwachsende Jugend mit deutschem Wesen vertraut zu machen und sie an Pflichterfüllung zu gewöhnen."

41 Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 270.

> opinion far surpasses that of our average Polacks [*Durchschnittspolacken*], as well as the agility of his body, enable very rapid training in the various branches of service.[42]

Reisner's paternalization of the Samoans as "brown sons of the South Sea" echoes the topos of the "noble savage" Polynesian in Coerper's statement and illustrates his characterization with racialized features of body and mind. With the comparison to the Polish minority in the metropole, he further integrates the "noble" Samoan into a discourse on racial hierarchy within the empire, with which he could expect his readership to be familiar. Reisner goes further, however, and sets limits to the cultural development of these "*Naturmenschen*"*("Natural people")*:

> Unfortunately, upon closer examination, their suitability for service in the domestic army is very doubtful. […] In an emergency, however, the Samoans would fail primarily due to a lack of sense of duty; added to this is an inherent timidity, which I have often had occasion to observe. For these reasons, I consider the Samoan unsuitable for service in the domestic army.[43]

The strategic element of the native policy to transform Samoans, as exemplified by the *fitafita,* had clear boundaries. It was neither meant to "Germanize" the Samoans themselves nor elevate them to an equal level within the racial hierarchy. Instead, it aimed to let them get used to German rule and behave according to German interests as paternalized subordinates.

Although actors such as Solf, Coerper, and Reisner viewed the *fitafita* as a useful tool for their native policy, the corps was nevertheless a unique institution within German colonialism, as it was the only armed native corps that was interpreted by many contemporaries as a concession to indigenous traditions. This ambiguity was a key factor in the impact of native policemen's law enforcement on the complexly structured racial conflicts within the island colony.

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42 Reisner, "Bericht Über Eine Eventuelle Verwendung Der Fitafita's in Der Heimischen Armee," n.d., BA Berlin, R1001/3063, 87f. Original: "*Groß und schön gebaut hat der Samoaner die Erscheinung eines strammen und muskulösen Soldaten, dessen sich das. 1. Garderegiment nicht zu schämen bräuchte. […] Es ist eine Freude diese adretten braunen Söhne der Südsee in ihrem Dienst beobachten zu können […]. Die Intelligenz der Samoaner, die meines Erachtens, die unserer Durchschnittspolacken [sic] bei weitem überragt, sowie die Gelenkigkeit seines Körpers ermöglichen eine sehr schnelle Ausbildung in den verschiedenen Dienstzweige.*"

43 Ibid., 88. Original: "*Leider ist ihre Tauglichkeit für den Dienst in der heimischen Armee bei näherem Studieren sehr anzuzweifeln. […] An Ernstfalle dagegen würden die Samoaner vor allem durch Mangel an Pflichtgefühl versagen; dazu kommt eine ihm anhaftende Furchtsamkeit, die ich häufig zu beobachten Gelegenheit halte. Aus diesen Gründen halte ich den Samoaner für den Dienst in der heimischen Armee für unbrauchbar.*"

Native Law Enforcement

The powerful *Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln zu Hamburg (DHPG)*, the colonial government, and especially the private planters on small plantations saw the supply of labor to the colony as the main problem for economic development.[44] The *DHPG* had already begun to source labor from Melanesia in the proto-colonial era, mainly from the Gilbert Islands, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.[45] In the years after 1900, they were able to establish a monopoly on work contracts with Melanesians for their expanding plantations, resulting in over a thousand Melanesian workers arriving in Samoa by 1914.[46] Private planters also relied heavily on imported labor, but had to look elsewhere. Samoans were not considered for large-scale employment because, as many planters put it, their "natural state of life" would make them lazy, unreliable, and unfit for heavy labor. Eventually, planters turned to workers from China, which had a long history of labor export in the Pacific.[47] Plantation owners and colonial officials used a strategy of racializing workers to prevent solidarity or resistance among different groups of workers and to legitimize brutal disciplinary measures against them, involving flogging and solitary confinement.[48] As planter Frieda Zieschank noted in her memorandum:

> Black people are almost always harmless, good-natured (sometimes naughty) children. Their intelligence is limited, but they are usually loyal to their white masters. […] The one who can yell at them the loudest is the highest master. […] The Chinese are generally excellent workers and very intelligent. […] The Chinese respect quiet, serious dignity most of all. […] The coolie needs strictness, but unconditional fairness in treatment.[49]

Jürgen Schmidt's interpretation that there was "the same suspicion, antipathy, and racist ignorance" fostered by German planters toward both Melanesian and Chinese workers does not quite fit with Zieschank's position

44 Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 60. See also Moses, "The Coolie Labour Question," 101.

45 Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 60.

46 According to planter Frieda Zieschank, the *DHPG* had always 800-900 Melanesians ("black boys") employed. Frieda Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa (1906-1916)* (Haberland, 1918), 98.

47 Sebastian Conrad, "'Kulis' nach Preußen? Mobilität, chinesische Arbeiter und das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1890-1914," *Comparativ* 13, no. 4 (2003): 91.

48 Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 169.

49 Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzent in Samoa*, 100. Original: "*Die Schwarzen sind fast durchweg harmlose, gutmütige (manchmal auch ungezogene) Kinder. Ihre Intelligenz ist beschränkt, aber sie sind meist ihren weißen Herrn treu ergeben. […] Wer sie am stärksten anbrüllen kann, ist höchster Herr. […] Die Chinesen sind im allgemeinen vorzügliche Arbeiter und sehr intelligent. […] Der Chinese respektiert am meisten ruhige ernste Würde. […] Der Kuli braucht Strenge, aber unbedingte Gerechtigkeit in der Behandlung.*"

in this quoted passage.[50] Rather, it shows how a more complex racial hierarchization in Samoa could unfold with momentous but very different consequences for workers. In maintaining the disciplinary regime of this racially segregated, exploitative plantation economy, planters frequently relied on the support by Samoan *leoleo*, especially when dealing with the frequent cases of worker escapes.

Workers

With the arrival of the first Chinese contract laborers in 1903, the jurisdiction of the *leoleo* was extended from the district of Apia to the entire island of Upolu.[51] In a regulation regarding the Chinese laborers, Solf's government declared, among other things that, "Workers found outside their workplace after this time [9 p.m.] are to be arrested by the police unless the reason for their prolonged absence is noted."[52]

The control of the Chinese workers became one of the main tasks of the *leoleo*, whose ranks were soon doubled to 20 in 1903, followed by further increases in the subsequent years.[53] The colonial administration kept a register of Chinese workers that gives an idea of the frequency of runaways from the workplace, although the documentation from this period overlaps with that of the New Zealand Administration after 1914. Over the course of 19 years, 847 cases were recorded.[54] The most common descriptors listed in the register were "returned to plantation," "fishing in the seaside," "arrested by policeman," "arrested by natives in the bush in Malua," "came to Chinese Commissioner's Office," and "sentenced for disobedience."[55] The deployments of *leoleo* and in many cases even *fitafita* to discipline workers were not rare, but were in fact central for the modus operandi of the disciplinary system in Samoa.

Apart from the punishment carried out directly by the plantation owners, any violation of the above regulation was typically enforced by native policemen.

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50 Jürgen Schmidt, "Arbeit Und Nicht-Arbeit Im 'Paradies Der Südsee:' Samoa Um 1890 Bis 1914," *Arbeit-Bewegung-Geschichte. Zeitschrift Für Historische Studien* 15 (2016): 22.

51 Holger Droessler, "How Chinese Migrant Workers Resisted Coconut Colonialism in Samoa," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 20 (2022): 3. See also Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 268.

52 "Verordnung Des Gouverneurs von Samoa, Betreffend Die Chinesischen Arbeiter," January 6, 1912, R1001/5588, 47. The regulation from 1912 replaced similar regulation on Chinese laborers, dating back to 1903. Original: "*Arbeiter die nach dieser Zeit [9pm] außerhalb ihres Arbeitsplatzes angetroffen werden, sind von der Polizei festzunehmen, falls sie nicht auf dem Zweck des längeren Ausbleibens vermerkt ist.*"

53 Hiery, "Polizei im deutschen Samoa," 268.

54 "Register, German Chinese Commissioner, 1913–1932," ANZ Wellington, SAMOA-BMO Series 2, box 3, item 12, cited after: Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 84.

55 Ibid., 85.

A report in the *Samoanische Zeitung*, Samoa's only newspaper, dated July 27, 1907, details fights among Chinese workers far from their work sites. The article reported the planter's call for assistance from Samoan policemen and lamented the planters' "inability to keep track of their employees." According to the article, the policemen then came and settled the conflict.[56] Another article in the *Samoanische Zeitung* reported the arrest of multiple Chinese workers by *leoleo* in 1914.[57] Yet another article reported a fire alarm that was sounded by a *leoleo* on May 15, 1914. When other *leoleo* arrived at the location of the fire, they "first thought, a Chinese gambler's hub [*Spielernest*] was about to be raided," which suggests such action was not uncommon practice for the *leoleo*.[58] According to historian Ben Featuna'i Liua'ana, many Chinese workers feared imprisonment "as a judgement of hell" because of the "well-known" brutality of Samoan policemen.[59]

In what way did the use of *leoleo* against the Chinese workers interact with racial conflict? After 1900, many Samoans soon began to oppose the immigration of Chinese laborers, opening a conflict that was interpreted in racial terms and fueled by two main factors: firstly, the wage pressures of large-scale labor immigration did not go unnoticed by Samoans. In addition, some Samoan *matai* feared that the arrival of Chinese laborers might threaten their position in the islands' hierarchy.[60] Secondly, the status of underprivileged Chinese workers in relation to native Samoans violated the Chinese self-image of an ancient *Kulturvolk* as superior to the islanders. A book published by the Planter's Association commented on this sentiment, "The Chinese coolie, the ambitious and hard-working field laborer, the bearer of an ancient culture, is mistakenly placed below the native in social status, who also in his eyes is a wild and lazy slacker [*Faulpelz*]."[61] The author's implicit agreement with this perception ("mistakenly," "*also* in his eyes") is followed by an even more explicit statement "In this regard, too, it is therefore essential to demand that the Samoans be brought down a little from their position of superiority [*Herrenstandpunkt*], for it must be absolutely unacceptable to relax discipline

56 *Samoanische Zeitschrift*, July 27, 1907, 1.

57 *Samoanische Zeitschrift*, March 28, 1914, 2.

58 *Samoanische Zeitschrift*, May 23, 1914, 2.

59 Ben Featuna'i Liua'ana, "Dragons in Little Paradise: Chinese (Mis-) Fortunes in Samoa, 1900–1950," *The Journal of Pacific History* 32, no. 1 (June 1, 1997): 38.

60 Franz von Tyszka, *Dr. Solf und Samoa: Politisch-wirtschaftliche Skizze* (Berlin: Deutscher Kolonial-Verlag, 1904), 31. For the Samoan-Chinese conflict see Droessler, *Coconut Colonialism*, 168. See also Morlang, *Askari Und Fitafita: "Farbige" Söldner in Den Deutschen Kolonien*, 136.

61 Pflanzerverein, ed., *Pflanzungs-Betriebe auf Samoa: Auskunft über das Schutzgebiet* (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1910), 19. Original: "*Der chinesische Kuli, der strebsame und fleißige Feldarbeiter, der Träger einer alten Kultur, steht seiner sozialen Stellung nach fälschlicherweise unter dem Eingeborenen, der auch in seinen Augen ein wilder und träger Faulpelz ist*."

among the Chinese coolies even more than has been the case up to now."[62]

Here, too, the planters sought to take control of the racialized hierarchy and to shape it to their own advantage. More importantly, corporal punishment was seen by Chinese representatives as the central issue of racial hierarchy in Samoa. For several years, their consul in Apia pushed for Chinese workers to be treated the same as Europeans, forbidding any of the corporal punishment so often inflicted by members of the "inferior" race of islanders. In 1911, he finally succeeded in his goal, and the colonial administration implemented a regulation to this effect.[63]

In Samoa's racially segregated plantation economy and disciplinary system, the problematic corporal punishment of Chinese laborers by *leoleo* became the flashpoint in what could be described as a struggle within the social hierarchy. This struggle was understood in racial terms by both Chinese laborers as well as by German planters and officials. The Germans sought to exploit the racial segregation but also had to be concerned about its potential for conflict that would undermine their mission or escape their control. This is not to say that corporal punishment executed by Euro-Americans was not also seen as an affront to the Chinese "racial prestige." However, disciplinary measures by Samoan policemen were not only more common and frequently violent, but they also challenged the self-identification of the Chinese as a superior *Kulturvolk* to a higher extent.[64]

Samoans' struggle within the social hierarchy of the colony was apparently also affected along the lines of racial segregation. In 1909, a rumor that all Samoan policemen were to be abolished and replaced by "black" Melanesian police-soldiers from New-Guinea became known to the *Samoanische Zeitung*, who anxiously proclaimed that this would lead to social conflict: "[T]he insult must seem even greater to them to see their places taken by a significantly lower race."[65]

In 1914, ten young Samoans, many of whom were sons of *matai* and educated in missionary schools, gathered for a secret *fono* (assembly) led by

62 Ibid. Original: "*Es ist also auch in dieser Beziehung unbedingt zu fordern, daß die Samoaner ein wenig von ihrem Herrenstandpunkt herabgedrückt werden; denn es muß absolut zu verwerfen sein, die Zucht unter den chinesischen Kulis noch mehr als bisher zu lockern*."

63 Schmidt, "Arbeit Und Nicht-Arbeit," 23. See also Moses, "The Coolie Labour Question," 114.

64 In a complaint regarding the Chinese Workers in Samoa, the Chinese consul argued with the "dignity of the Chinese empire," but contrasts it with the "colored," thus racialized, native tribes. "Kaiserlich Chinesische Gesandtschaft, Treatment of Chinese, Samoan Island," December 23, 1910, BA Berlin, R 1001/5588, 2.

65 "Die Schwarze Schutztruppe," *Samoanische Zeitschrift*, May 8, 1909, 1.

Taio Tolo to discuss their relation to the Germans. A transcript in Samoan, which was translated into German by the colonial administration after the meeting was exposed, provides a critical Samoan perspective on the racialized hierarchy on the archipelago.[66] Under the heading "Why are the Germans and the Samoans not on equal footing?" a man named Paniani is quoted:

> It is true that we are not treated very well by the Europeans. In our office (post office) we are not regarded as civil servants, but in the eyes of the Europeans we are to a certain extent like servants or black contract workers. The white masters regard us with complete disdain in relation to our working relationship with them.[67]

Recently, historian Matthew Fitzpatrick referenced this *fono* to emphasize a rising anticolonial resentment among Samoa's youth against the German colonizers. However, he underexposes the more complex social conflict between the different racialized groups in Samoa like the Melanesian "black contract workers," with whom the youth do not want to be equated by the Germans. Furthermore, their status as "post men" can be read as an indication that at least some of those present were members of the *fitafita,* who were usually assigned this type of work. Given the common deployments of *fitafita* to discipline Chinese workers, it is not surprising that those present also saw their people's future fundamentally threatened by the Chinese presence. Under "Agenda item III: The cohabitation of Samoan women with Chinese" Paniani is again quoted, "This is completely unseemly, in future there will only be Chinese hybrids [*Mischlinge*] on our islands. This bad habit must be strictly prohibited and all Samoan women living with Chinese must be separated from them."[68]

Planters

The challenge of native law enforcement to the racialized hierarchy in Samoa was further complicated when the *leoleo* used violence against planters. The most prominent case occurred in December 1902. According to witnesses, the German Hermann Matzat, owner of a small cacao plantation and member of the *Pflanzerverein* (Planters' Association), had in a drunken state racially abused a

66 "Bericht über das Fono (Ratsversammlung) am Donnerstag den 5. Februar 1914, BA Berlin," R1001/2760, 174–184.

67 Ibid., 181. Original: "*Es ist wahr, wir werden von den Europäern durchaus nicht gut behandelt. In unserm Amt (Post) sieht man uns nicht wie Beamte an, sondern wir sind nach Ansicht der Europäer gewissermassen wie Knechte oder schwarze Kontraktarbeiter; die weissen Herren betrachten uns in Bezug auf unser Arbeitsverhältnis zu ihnen mit gänzlicher Geringschätzung.*"

68 Ibid., 184. Original: "*Die ist gänzlich ungehörig, in Zukunft wird es nur noch chinesische Mischlinge auf unseren Inseln geben. Diese Unsitte muss streng verboten und alle Samoanerinnen, die mit Chinesen leben, von ihnen getrennt werden*."

leoleo named Fialii in Apia.[69] After a brief quarrel, Matzat had pushed Fialii and then went to a police station to report alleged police misconduct. Much to his surprise, he was arrested on his way to the station and taken to jail by other *leoleo* on order of police chief Fries. According to the latter, Matzat resisted when he arrived at the prison and was beaten by several *leoleo*.[70] After weeks of court hearings, Matzat was sentenced to one month in prison for resisting the authority of the state, represented in this case by the native policemen. After an appeal, the sentence was reduced to a fine of 100 Marks.[71]

The incident unleashed a wave of outrage that washed over the metropolis. Not satisfied with his sentence, Matzat wrote a complaint to the Foreign Office and informed German newspapers, many of which then reported on his case.[72] Even more prominent was the mention of the incident in the Reichstag by SPD parliamentarian Arthur Stadthagen during a budget debate for Samoa on April 23, 1904.[73] Although the SPD was generally considered critical of colonialism,[74] in his speech Stadthagen sided with the Samoan planters who had asked for his support. After describing the "scandalous incident," he exclaimed, "Planters come to Apia, and the result is that they are harangued [harangiert] by a black man who is paid with German money as a police officer […] They only come into contact with police officers and police soldiers in a negative way."[75] Remarkably, in Stadthagen's speech, the Samoan policemen suddenly became "black," in contrast to the established description of the Polynesian "race" as "brown" or "bronze" in colonial discourse. He goes even further while describing the wounds Matzat suffered in his prison cell at the hands of several native policemen: "He looks like he's been mauled by cannibals, but not with [sic] police officers."[76]

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69 Tyszka, *Dr. Solf und Samoa*, 20. Matzat had already racially insulted another *leoleo* and former *fitafita* named Rapoli just a few weeks ago and was sentenced to a fine. See also Reichstag, Stenographische Berichte ("Stenographic Reports"), 1903/05, vol. 3, 23 April 1904, 2356.

70 Tyszka, *Dr. Solf und Samoa*, 20.

71 Ibid. Franz von Tyszka was another planter and like Matzat member of the *Pflanzerverein.* For another report of the incident see also "Reichstagsprotokolle, 1903/05,3," 2355.

72 Thomas Morlang, "'Prestige der Rasse' contra 'Prestige des Staates:' Die Diskussionen über die Befugnisse farbiger Polizeisoldaten Gegenüber Europäern in den deutschen Kolonien," *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft* 49, no. 6 (2001): 499. Thomas Marlang has briefly discussed the "Matzat case" as a trigger for a broader debate about the legal authority of native policemen in other German colonies. See also "Der Fall Matzat," *Koloniale Zeitschrift* 4, no. 11 (1903): 195–97.

73 "Reichstagsprotokolle, 1903/05,3," 2355–59.

74 Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 27.

75 "Reichstagsprotokolle, 1903/05,3," 2356. Original: "*Es kommen Pflanzer nach Apia, und die Folge ist, daß sie von einem schwarzen Menschen, der mit deutschem Gelde als Polizeibeamter bezahlt wird, harangiert werden. […] In böser Berührung kommen sie nur mit den Polizeibeamten und Polizeisoldaten. […]*"

76 Ibid., 2357.

On the first level, Stadthagen's reinterpretation of the Samoans as belonging to the "black race," being potential "cannibals," shows the degree of outrage that could be provoked even among SPD parliamentarians by native violence, even or rather especially when legally exercised through the German legal system.[77] In this way, the unique case of law enforcement by colonized subjects against Europeans provides a useful analytical vehicle to outline the discursive fragility of white supremacy in the *Kaiserreich*.[78] However, Stadthagen's use of the term "cannibal" here should not be misunderstood as a mere racial stereotype toward Pacific Islanders in general. In ethnological discourse on "races" in the Pacific, the "noble," "superior," and "brown" Polynesian was often contrasted with the "brutal," "cannibalistic," and "black" Melanesian "race."[79] In order to emphatically rally behind the "small planters" against Solf and the "capitalist" *DHPG*, as Stadthagen expresses in his speech, he disregards the Samoan's positionality within the more common hierarchization of colonized groups in the Pacific and reassigns them to the "cannibalistic" faction.[80]

This "blackening" of Samoans was an unusual discursive practice even for members of the *Pflanzerverein* in Samoa. In a book that aimed to attract more planters to settle in Samoa and published only a few years earlier in 1901, Richard Deeken had painted a rather positive picture of Samoan policemen. He reported that the *fitafita* "made quite a good impression with their dressy [*kleidsamen*] white uniforms"[81] and considered the issuance of a traffic ticket for horse riding above the speed limit in Apia by a *leoleo* as a "joyful" sign for the establishment of "German order" in Samoa.[82] In this context, then, Stadthagen's speech shows how the Samoan "race" was a fluid category whose classification could vary significantly, with momentous consequences. The same policemen who had so "pleasantly" represented German law and order when issuing a rather

77 However, to claim an association of Stadthagen with right-wing politics would be rather unprecise. Clearly, Stadthagen saw the instrumentalization of the case rhetorically fitting a means for his criticism against law-and-order policies and police practices, represented here by a Samoan, but policemen of the German state nevertheless.

78 There were also some similar incidents reported in German East Africa. However, other than Samoa, no colony had fewer German officers in police service and therefore had to rely on such a great extent of native police autonomy. The Matzat case also triggered a vivid discussion about the authorization of native policemen against white settlers in all German colonies. See Morlang, "Befugnisse Farbiger Polizeisoldaten,"

79 Samulski, "Rassenpolitik im Schutzgebiet Samoa," 333.

80 For the relation between the terms "noble savage" and "cannibal" in colonial discourse see Dirk van Laak, "Die deutsche Kolonialgeschichte als Fantasiegeschichte," in *Deutschland Postkolonial?: Die Gegenwart der imperialen Vergangenheit*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Joachim Zeller (Metropol, 2021), 125.

81 Richard Deeken, *Manuia Samoa!: Samoanische Reiseskizzen Und Beobachtungen* (Stalling, 1901), 21. The book had a remarkable impact on the German public, drawing many new planters to Samoa. See also Moses, "The Coolie Labour Question," 103.

82 Deeken, *Manuia Samoa!*, 68.

harmless speeding ticket could become "black cannibals" when autonomously enforcing the law against Europeans. With strong echoes in the political heart of the metropolis, the outrage over such actions could potentially lead not only to a budget cut or even the abolition of the *leoleo*, but also to a fundamental challenge to Solf's "salvage colonialism" approach.[83]

The wave of outrage unleashed by the Matzat case also had an impact among the members of the *Pflanzerverein*. In 1904, planter Franz von Tyszka published a short book titled "Dr. Solf und Samoa," in which he indignantly describes the incident and uses it as the basis for a demand on Solf's colonial government for the, "Reduction of the fifteen Samoan police officers to seven, but with one more white police officer. […] It must be demanded in the strongest terms that police officers of color only be deployed against people of color, and that only white police officers be deployed against white people."[84] He also called for the complete abolishment of the *fitafita*, who, "thanks to their military training," would "undoubtedly serve as leaders in the event of an uprising."[85] As the title already implies, Tyszka wrote the book as an inflammatory speech against the rule of the governor. Solf's restriction of land to the belt around Apia, the increase in import duties, his close ties to the *DHPG* with their monopoly on Melanesian labor, and his inclusive approach to the remaining English and American planters had already made his rule unpopular for some planters. Above all, they objected to Solf's policy of salvage colonialism toward the Samoans. The use of native policemen against white planters was seen as a telling example of the allegedly misplaced priorities of Samoa's colonial administration.[86] In 1909, planters took an unsuccessful rebellion by a Samoan faction around the *matai* Lauaki Namulauulu Mamoe as an opportunity to start a campaign for the abolishment of the *fitafita* and *leoleo,* including a petition to the Reichskolonialamt in Berlin.[87]

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83 Despite his critics, Solf achieved enough support within the *Reichskolonialamt* and Reichstag to get himself enough freedom for his salvage colonialism approach.

84 Tyszka, *Dr. Solf und Samoa*, 33. Original: "*Reduzierung der fünzehn samoanischen Polizisten auf sieben, dafür ein weißer Polizist mehr. […] Mit aller Schärfe muss gefordert werden, daß farbige Polizisten nur gegen Farbige, gegen Weiße aber nur weiße Polizisten zur Anwendung kommen*."

85 Ibid. Own translation. Original: "*Dank ihrer militärischen Ausbildung würden sie bei einem etwaigen Aufstande zweifellos als Anführer dienen, umsomehr als die Zahl der militärisch geschulten Leute durch stetige Rekrutierung von Jahr zu Jahr wächst*."

86 For a discussion of the conflict between Solf and the planters see Stewart Firth, "Governors versus Settlers: The Dispute Over Chinese Labour in German Samoa," *New Zealand Journal of History* 11, no. 2 (1977): 155–79. Based on planters' reports, the *Koloniale Zeitschrift* wrote in an article in 1903: "Diese Fälle sind fast typisch für die Verhältnisse in unserer Kolonie Samoa. Dieses Haschen nach der Gunst der Farbigen, selbst zum Schaden der Europäer." "Der Fall Matzat," 197.

87 "Das Jubilierende Samoa," *Leipziger Tageblatt*, November 13, 1909, 1.

The supposed nexus between native police and misguided native policy was attacked even more furiously by the planter's advocates in the German press than any measures taken by the planters themselves.

> The previous pampering of the natives and the whole native self-government charade [*Selbstverwaltungszauber*] borders on the undignified in its current form. […] The native prestige troop, the Fita-Fita, [...] is the characteristic result of the pampering of the natives [*Eingeborenenverhätschelung*] there. It must be replaced by a white troop. [...] A healthy native policy can only be based on strict racial separation and the unconditional supremacy of the white race.[88]

In historical research on this anxiety of an endangered "white supremacy," many historians have focused on the role of Euro-Samoan "intermarriages."[89] According to their findings, two main challenges were posed by intermarriages and the children resulting from them. On a practical level, they were undermining attempts of clear-cut classifications of people by the colonial administration, especially in legal matters. Moreover, intermarriages were conflicting with eugenic ideologies of white supremacy, most prominently substantive in the fear of "racial degeneration."[90] The rather neglected case of Samoan law enforcement against white planters was also part of this puzzle. The inversion of the colonizer/colonized dichotomy through the use of violence by Samoan policemen was understood as a threat to the "prestige" of the "white race," which for many contemporaries had to be defended at all costs. In a book on Samoa, the German publicist Hermann Fiedler wrote: "The rule of white people must be justified in such a way that their prestige vis-à-vis the natives is maintained in all cases."[91] While some toned down their criticism of the Matzat incident in comparison to Stadthagen, all subsequent speakers from various parties agreed with Fiedler's view in the Reichstag debate.[92]

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88 "Was ist Koloniale Eingeborenenpolitik?," *Leipziger Tageblatt*, March 21, 1909. Original: "*Die bisherige Verhätschelung der Eingeborenen und der ganze eingeborene Selbstverwaltungszauber grenzt in seiner jetzigen Verfassung ans Würdelose. […] Die eingeborene Renommiertruppe, die Fita-Fita, […] ist der charakteristische Ausfluß der dortigen Eingeborenenverhätschelung. An ihre Stelle muß eine weiße Truppe treten. […] Eine gesunde Eingeborenenpolitik kann sich nur auf reinliche Rassenscheidung, unbedingte Vorherrschaft der weißen Rasse gründen.*"

89 Fitzpatrick, "Samoan Women's Revolt;" Samulski, "Rassenpolitik im Schutzgebiet Samoa."

90 For the fear of "degeneration" see the influential work Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule," in *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (Routledge, 2010), 189. For the context of German Colonialism see Fitzpatrick, "The Threat of 'Woolly-Haired Grandchildren.'"

91 Hermann Fiedler, *Regierung und Nutzbarmachung der Samoanischen Inseln* (Süsserott, 1906), 11.

92 "Reichstagsprotokolle, 1903/05,3," 2358f.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that it was precisely through their particular role as law enforcers of German state authority that Samoan policemen became a threat to the colonial racial hierarchy in Samoa and beyond. Initially, corporal punishment inflicted by Samoans on Chinese workers in Samoa provoked the "racial prestige" of members of an "ancient Chinese *Kulturvolk.*" If Samoans exercised state power even against white planters, as in the Matzat case, they threatened the rule of colonial difference between colonizer and colonized not only within the social hierarchy of Samoa, but in German colonialism in general. This study can thus serve as a further path in the discussion of the threat to the rule of colonial difference posed by intermarriage, which researchers have already addressed in greater detail. In the case of the Samoan police, however, the threat was neither "racial degeneration" nor merely the blurring of a clear boundary between rulers and ruled, but rather a radical inversion of those roles, expressed most offensively in the use of force.

In colonial discourse, as in Stadthagen's speech in the Reichstag, this also had repercussions for the placement of Samoans in the racial hierarchy. The same Samoan police officers who in other contexts were paternalistically orientalized and idealized as "brown sons of the South Seas" could become "black cannibals" when they used violence against whites. The study of the Samoan police can thus also shed light on the often-contradictory knowledge production of racist colonial discourses, in which racial classifications were far from stable.

Finally, the study highlights a latent conflict in German colonialism between state authority , represented by the controversial Samoan policemen, and a "white supremacy" that had to be preserved at all costs but was threatened when these policemen used state power against white planters.