Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952 by Solsiree del Moral (review)

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factors like electoral exclusion, and additional factors such as the “organizational capacities available to rebellious groups” and “government reactions to popular protest” (p. 24). In later chapters, state-level cultural factors are added to the mix as well. High levels of APF in Oaxaca are partially attributed to “complex cultural aspects developed since pre-Hispanic and colonial times” (p. 107), while the culture of “hard work, savings, entrepreneurial mentality, and family values” works to preclude APF in Nuevo León (p. 133). From among all of these contributory causes, Correa-Cabrera argues that greater weight should be given to institutional factors (p. 148). But it is not clear how this relative weighting could be determined with any precision, especially since the institutional variation across states is at least partially a function of underlying economic structure to begin with (p. 151).

Thus the book does not fully solve the puzzle of the “two Mexicos.” But Correa-Cabrera asks interesting questions about the distinct political histories of Oaxaca and Nuevo León, and in providing some answers the book offers a rich array of possibilities for future exploration.

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This is a critically important contribution to the field of history, more specifically, the history of educational policy and practice in Puerto Rico and the U.S. It contributes to the scholarship on colonialism and empire while it demands that scholars in this field be attentive to the voices and visions of the subaltern that challenged the emergent U.S. colonial state. In other instances, these social actors colluded with the U.S. government given different imaginings about the nation and its citizen-subjects in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Puerto Rico. Del Moral’s attention to the varied subject-positions of the teaching professionals delineates how complex negotiations about the implementation of policies and practices in the schools were informed by the class and the gendered and racialized status of Puerto Rican teachers vis-à-vis their compatriots.

The author’s insights regarding the rhetorical and symbolic renderings of U.S. and Anglo superiority in the 1899 *Puck* illustration, “School Begins” and the *Harpers’ Weekly* 1898 cover, “Uncle Sam’s New Class in the Art of Self-Government,” powerfully conjoin the practices and policies of appointed U.S. government officials with the racializing discursive practices and sentiments that informed Manifest Destiny. Thus Del Moral’s work informs emergent scholarship on education and empire in the U.S., Latin America, and the Pacific. U.S. educational policy and practice in Puerto Rico are linked to the formation of schools for African-American and Native peoples in the U.S. and other colonized territories. The author conceptualizes the relationship between race, education, and empire by drawing from the experiences of key military officers
appointed to develop federal policies to delimit the instruction of African-Americans, Native Americans, Filipinos, and Hawaiians.

The introduction and chapters one and two serve to anchor chapters three and four: citizenship, gender, and the schools and testing for citizenship in the diaspora. These are highly provocative chapters that demonstrate how eugenics, gender, and class operated to delimit the teaching profession and the educational possibilities of the children on the island. In chapter five, the author shows how parents and their children availed themselves of circulating discourses and practices in the early twentieth to lay claim to a public education.

Chapter 4 is a tour de force. Del Moral demonstrates the salience of the history of race in the US, focusing on the “scientific” assumptions that informed the articulation of eugenics and nation-building in the United States and Puerto Rico and the deployment of *raza* that impinged upon the well-being of the emergent Puerto Rican nation at the dawn of the twentieth century. Del Moral’s analysis of Clairette Armstrong’s 1935 study of Puerto Rican children in New York City demonstrates how so-called scientific eugenic testing was deployed to racialize Puerto Rican migrants. Rather than fully righting a wrong, the assistant commissioner of education in Puerto Rico, Pedro Cebollero, challenged the New York-based study via the construction of difference—that is, between the diaspora and the island nation of Puerto Rico. Cebollero sought to demonstrate “how ‘racial’ and ‘national’ differences were fundamental to the construction of ‘authentic,’ island-based, Puerto Rican identities.” By doing so, del Moral forcefully argues, he affirmed Puerto Rico’s colonial relationship with the United States as well as the class and race-based politics that haunt the island and the diaspora into the present.

*Negotiating Empire* is a well-written historiography of the overlapping and diasporic meanings of race and *raza* that reveals how these concepts complement one another in particular contexts, and diametrically oppose each other in others, given the complexities of ideologies circulating the globe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I would like to see how teachers, parents and children in the diaspora would respond to these representations. Perhaps that is the basis of another book.

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The 1990s was a good decade for the organizations of Mexico’s indigenous movement. The 1992 Anti-Quincentenario brought indigenous peoples and their allies together from across the country to organize counter-mobilizations. The 1994 Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) uprising focused the nation’s attention on the political and socioeconomic marginalization of indigenous peoples in a historically unprece-