

men who believed in the power of science and their self-appointed mission to guide the nation in its path towards civilisation. The author's emphasis on gender and on the racist component of social pathologists' thought is a necessary and welcome approach. Moreover, her decision to introduce personal and professional histories in her narrative, as is the case with José Ingenieros and particularly with Juan Vucetich, the inventor of fingerprinting, proves an interesting strategy.

However, the text has an important drawback that stems from the author's choice to focus on the mind frame and discourses of Argentine doctors, hygienists and criminologists. Even if her intention is to emphasise the limits and contradictions of 'social pathologists', Rodríguez runs the risk of repeating the rationale of the subjects under study. Her statements about the opposition between the power of the church and the progress of scientific thought are a point in case. Rodríguez states that in Argentina, the turn of the century meant 'an opportunity to turn away from traditional practices and church control' (p. 97) as regards gender roles. Nevertheless, when she finds that both doctors and 'religious institutions' shared very similar ideas on vices and virtues, Rodríguez relativises the reach and transformations in Argentine scientific thought at the time, concluding that 'science had not changed fundamental assumptions about gender or roles for women' (p. 99). The fixed opposition between scientific thought, on the one hand, and a traditional and religious environment, on the other, does not explain the complex turn-of-the-century Argentine reality, and ultimately that opposition stands unchallenged in her interpretation. Moreover, Rodríguez's statements on the alleged 'church control' over Argentine women at the time and on the absence of gender change are not corroborated by other evidence.

Readers should be cautious about some statements that are not sufficiently backed by the evidence presented in the book. There are also some mistaken facts, such as the statement that Eduardo Wilde was president of Argentina. However, by systematising multiple aspects of the ideas of Argentine men of science and compounding these with partial biographical studies, Rodríguez's book may be useful as a first glimpse into the ideas and practices of Argentine scientists at the turn of the twentieth century.

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Patrick J. McNamara, *Sons of the Sierra: Juárez, Díaz & the People of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, 1855–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. xiv + 282, \$65.00, \$23.00, pb.

It is well known that the creation of the Liberal state in nineteenth-century Mexico owed much to two leaders of indigenous descent from the southern state of Oaxaca: Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. Much less is known about how, or indeed whether at all, the people of Oaxaca benefited from the success of these illustrious native sons. In *Sons of the Sierra*, Patrick McNamara explores how the legacies of Juárez and Díaz shaped popular politics in the Sierra de Ixtlán, the region of the state where Juárez and Díaz emerged, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Here mestizo entrepreneurs and Zapotec peasant communities were able to claim a special relationship with the Liberal state because of their distinguished

participation in the triumph of Liberals over Conservatives in the Three Years War (1857–60), in the defeat of the European Intervention that followed, and in Díaz's rise to power.

The success of the Sierra de Ixtlán's National Guard veterans in retaining their arms and immunity from taxation until the early twentieth century, forty years after their initial patriotic sacrifices (and long after their counterparts elsewhere in Mexico had been disarmed) owed much to the fortune of being able to address their petitions to one of their own, Porfirio Díaz, the Sierra's most distinguished native son. Díaz began his political career in 1855 as prefect and military commander of the district of Ixtlán and retained a paternal interest in the area until his removal from office in 1911. Yet, as other regional studies attest, the praetorian experience of these Zapotec peasants was not unique. During the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, indigenous communities in other regions of Mesoamerica engaged in military service in order to enhance their political status and to assert the right to be heard.

Regional historians will find McNamara's concepts of 'heroic patriarchy' and 'communal literacy' useful for explaining how indigenous communities, or at least their leaders and scribes, were able to receive some long-term benefits from their military tribute to the Liberal state. 'Heroic patriarchy' refers to the discourse of petitions and correspondence between towns and higher authorities in which citizens reminded idealised paternal governments of the patriotic blood sacrifices they or their *antepasados* had made in defence of the nation, and of the state's promises of tax immunities and respect for constitutional guarantees. These petitions form the core documentation of McNamara's book. 'Communal literacy' refers to the process through which largely illiterate communities, by using local scribes (or lawyers and scribes in state and national capitals), circumvented undemocratic political structures and got their message across to higher authorities. McNamara plots these external ties in order to explain how the Sierra de Ixtlán continued to influence state and national politics long after its leaders had demobilised their forces and returned to 'peasant-bourgeois' provincialism.

In explaining the onset of a peasant praetorian tradition in the Sierra de Ixtlán McNamara adopts Marcello Carmagnani's notion of the 'second conquest' of the indigenous communities. From the late 1840s, spurred by the catastrophe of the US war, remoter sierra areas which had been loosely and indirectly governed during the colonial era, and had experienced little administrative innovation since Independence, became exposed to much more active state-building by prefects and *jefes políticos*, generally recruited from the mestizo population. The formation of National Guard companies, along with the establishment of schools and musical bands, provided ways of mobilising the resources and sentiments of indigenous communities around a new, locally controlled, cultural and political agenda. Companies of the National Guard in the Sierra de Ixtlán were organised by *principales* and placed under native commanders. The Zapotec tradition of bestowing communal authority upon hereditary *principales* contrasted with the practice in the Puebla sierra where young indigenous *macebuales* (commoners) often gained command of companies. Between the 1850s and the 1870s the Sierra de Ixtlán became Oaxaca's equivalent to the insurgent town of El Alto near La Paz in contemporary Bolivia; strategically well placed for marching on the state capital, but almost impossible for external forces to take or to pacify. In the Puebla sierra, Xochiapulco and Tetela de Ocampo performed a similar function during the same period, as

citadels of patriotic Liberalism. McNamara shows how in the Sierra de Ixtlán, as in the southern Puebla sierra, ‘all men had the opportunity to join the National Guard, and all men could claim to have played an important role in defending the nation’ (p. 37).

Although Zapotec community leaders acted as company commanders, overall political and military control of the Sierra de Ixtlán belonged to a small clutch of non-indigenous mining and commercial families: the Hernández, the Castro, and, most prominently, the Meijueiro. There was no Zapotec equivalent to Juan Francisco Lucas, Nahua ‘patriarch’ of the Puebla sierra. But there were plenty of renowned local indigenous leaders, such as Felipe García of Guelatao (Juárez’s birthplace), whose signatures and reminders of patriotic services (García was still petitioning in 1903, aged 96), added significant weight to the village petitions that continually made their way to Díaz’s office in Mexico City during his regime. In deference to the literary turn in history, McNamara dwells more on the rhetoric of these petitions and on the identities of those who drafted and delivered them than on conventional military and political narrative. Nevertheless, this is a beautifully written and succinct book which succeeds in contributing many regional nuances to our understanding of sixty years of Mexico’s Liberal revolution.

By the turn of the twentieth century these local strategies of appealing to Liberal paternalism by invoking a common patriotic history had become attenuated as a new generation of mestizo entrepreneurs with no direct memory of the glorious Liberal-patriotic past sought greater control over the resources of the sierra. Conflicts also mounted within and between communities; over land, the control of village labour, over who should be custodian of Juárez’s memory, and, not least, over elections. In the face of Madero’s uprising, Díaz ordered Fidencio Hernández and Guillermo Meijueiro, scions of the great mid-nineteenth century Liberal caciques of the Sierra, to come to his aid by re-establishing the Ixtlán battalion that he had first mustered in 1855. They agreed, but made the mistake of bypassing village elders and arming young indigenous men. With the fall of Díaz, the delicate inter-ethnic balance sustained by a long tradition of cooperation between mestizo entrepreneurs and indigenous communities broke down as Zapotec *principales* took to arms in the Ixtepeji rebellion of 1912. The solidarities and identities that had grown up around the National Guard fifty years earlier, and which had served to underscore a degree of reciprocity between villages and higher authorities throughout the Porfiriato, could not easily be restored. Oaxaca’s political elites decided to shut the Revolution out rather than to allow it to deepen these divisions.

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Marie Eileen Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking and Governance in Mexico City, 1750–1920* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), pp. xiii + 415, £22.95, pb.

When we think of pawn shops in the contemporary Anglophone world, they bring to mind characters teetering precariously on the economic margins, hanging on by their fingernails, driven to desperation by vice or devastation. However, Marie Eileen Francois’ lively narrative of pawnbroking in Mexico City in the ‘long’ nineteenth century reveals a world that involved more women and more members of the