The book works best as an anthropological history offering fascinating, beautifully researched *indigenista* microhistories. It also provides surprising insights into the mélange of Callista educational politics at precisely the point where "nation" meant most to the regime and least to would-be citizens. Perhaps because of its rich specificity, however, the book works less well as a model of postrevolutionary state formation. The negotiated hegemony paradigm that works for altiplano villages seems less apposite for tribal enclaves that fleetingly sought SEP endorsement of their folkways and turned away when this was not forthcoming or proved counterproductive.

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True Stories of Crime in Modern Mexico. Edited by Robert Buffington and Pablo Piccato. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. Pp. xi, 276. Illustrations. Notes. Index. $27.95.

This collection consists of eight essays, plus an introduction by the editors. The introduction states that the authors wish to "examine how crime stories have shaped the way Mexican society thinks about criminals and about itself" (p. 4). Many of the essays are well written and insightful, employing an unusually lengthy and sophisticated line-up of influential theorists that includes the usual suspects (Crime? Modernity? Surely we will find the fingerprints of Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens!), as well as some surprise cameo appearances, much like a classic episode of the long-running *Law and Order* television series.

Yet, like this television show, one of the book's attractions, which ultimately threatens to undermine its goals, is that many of the essays are ripped from the headlines, both thematically and methodologically. Homicidal beauty queens, *corrido*-worthy thugs, vengeful prostitutes, and deranged assassins who drew the attention of the urban media: the modus operandi for most of the essays is analysis of such singular crimes and, often, the trials and media coverage of them, which, each author argues, allowed Mexicans at the time—and/or historians (sometimes this is not clear to the reader)—to explore the broader transformations roiling Mexico. Sensational crimes and the public responses to them are called upon to serve as synecdoches. In addition to a co-authored piece by the editors, plus a solo essay by Pablo Piccato, other contributors who employ this approach include Elisa Speckman Guerra, Renato González Mello, and Víctor Macías-González.

In the hands of such skillful scholars, one does indeed gain insights into some of the dislocations and anxieties through which Mexicans passed from the 1870s into the 1930s. Yet, this approach has its limits, as the types of crimes that received extensive media exposure and the geographical focus of most of the essays circumscribe the field of vision. As a result, there is a skew towards particular kinds of crime in particular places and to particular modes of analysis. Interestingly, an inherent critique of this approach appears in the remaining essays. One, by Cristina Rivera-Garza, turns the model above on its head, as the author delves into the obscure case of a patient with mental problems, highlighting the unique,

rather than the general, characteristics of the historical records she stumbled across. The essays that stray furthest from the capital or hint at the vast number of alternative methodologies and data that might be employed—Christopher Boyer's piece on Michoacán and Katherine Bliss's contemplation of maternity and the state—highlight the shortcomings of this volume. Nonetheless, aware of these limits of chronology, geography, and methodology, readers can approach the collection better able to benefit from what it does offer.

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DOCUMENTARY FILM

The Sugar Curtain. Directed by Camila Guzmán Urzúa. Brooklyn: First Run/Icarus Films, 2006. 80 minutes. DVD. $440.00.

The film *The Sugar Curtain*, directed by Camila Guzmán, is a sensitive, complex portrayal of the Cuban Revolution that captures the broad arc of the revolution's history from the 1960s to the present. It conveys the exhilaration the revolution once sparked among its supporters, the sense of participating in an ambitious collective project to forge a new nation and a "new man." It was a dream that collapsed abruptly and painfully with the fall of the Soviet Union and the onset of the Special Period, when many Cubans turned inward, falling back on family and friends for their daily survival.

Yet the film also tells a lesser-known story, recounting this history through the eyes of the generation that came of age during the revolution's "golden years" of the late 1970s and 1980s. Many studies of the revolution focus either on the generation that witnessed and contributed to the revolutionary triumph, or on the youth of today, never fully integrated in the revolutionary project. Yet the story of the in-between generation that the filmmaker herself belongs to has particular poignancy. Raised with the ideals of the revolution, and often still loyal to those ideals, many members of her generation eventually left the island to realize themselves personally and professionally, in the very terms that they had internalized from their educations within the revolution. This point is driven home when one interviewee offers a long litany of names and places: he is listing all his former classmates who now live abroad.

The film also touches briefly upon the virtually unstudied history of the flood of political refugees from the Southern Cone, for whom Cuba provided an important safe haven in the 1970s. The film's director is the daughter of the famed Chilean documentarian Patricio Guzmán, who fled with his family after the 1973 coup that toppled Salvador Allende, when Camila was only two years old. In one of the most moving moments of the film, the director's mother describes her gratitude for the stability Cuba offered after the trauma of Allende's overthrow. While not the primary subject of the documentary, we get a fascinating glimpse here of the intertwined histories of the Latin American left during the Cold War.