

indigenous tributaries. These factors together erased the colonial distinctions between individuals of African and Amerindian ancestry and further helped Afro-Argentines disappear from the historical record. Edwards concludes that generations of miscegenation, flexibility within the racial hierarchy, and shifting degrees of inequity between individuals of African and Amerindian descent created pathways for Córdoba's Afro-Argentines to “erase” their African ancestry and, in turn, construct a better social position for themselves and their descendants.

The book's heavy use of vignettes might have made it a natural selection for teaching. Unfortunately, however, Edwards limits her readership by not providing her readers with some basic but important historical foundations upon which she builds her arguments. In particular, non-experts would greatly benefit from an explanation of why Africans and Amerindians were legally classified so differently by colonial Spanish American officials. Certainly, this would have required Edwards to go beyond the history of Córdoba, but this digression would have made her arguments more accessible to a broader readership. Without this foundational work non-experts will likely struggle for a full grasp of Edwards's sound and logical arguments on how and why Afro-Argentine women successfully resisted and refashioned racial hierarchies to empower themselves and their descendants.

Despite this missed opportunity to produce a text for both experts and non-experts, Edwards's work promises to excite scholars interested in Afro-Argentine history with her gendered and provincially focused contribution to this field. Moreover, researchers interested in the broader field of Latin American racial history will enjoy this examination of how colonial-era racial hierarchies were reconfigured in the early national period.

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LIBERALISM IN MEXICO

Liberalism as Utopia: The Rise and Fall of Legal Rule in Post-Colonial Mexico, 1820–1900. By Timo H. Schaefer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 243. \$99.99 cloth.
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Timo Schaefer's monograph takes on three extensively studied phenomena in Mexican historiography—liberalism, local politics, and legal culture—and makes significant contributions on all three counts. Schaefer joins the ranks of scholars such as James Sanders, José Antonio Aguilar Rivera, Jaime Rodríguez O., Karen Caplan, and Douglas W. Richmond in examining nineteenth-century Mexican liberalism and its

appeal to popular sectors. This book departs from earlier scholarship's emphasis on popular liberalism as it appealed to plebeian classes. Instead, it defines "revolutionary liberalism" as "the idea that all adult male citizens, no matter their social position, were legal equals" (210). The late Porfiriato, the subject of the final chapter, saw the decline of revolutionary liberalism undermine the egalitarianism of the early nineteenth century. In his chapters on mestizo towns, indigenous towns, and haciendas, Schaefer builds a convincing argument based on archival research into primarily legal documents from Mexico City, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Oaxaca.

Chapters 1 and 2 cover mestizo towns, beginning with an overview of the organization of town councils where none had previously existed, called for by the 1812 Constitution of Spain. Its outlines for local government endured long after independence, but municipal policing fell to individual towns and the national governments to sort out. Soldiers, *milicias auxiliares*, patricians, and *ayuntamientos* (town councils) vied for control. In their dealings with such authorities, common folk asserted their status and requested their intervention with the confidence of legal equals.

Categorizing most sizeable settlements with local self-rule in San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato as mestizo towns obscures their differing ethnic compositions. Schaefer notes that such towns were primarily indigenous, but the term was supposedly applied to towns without preexisting indigenous local self-rule. However, many population sites in San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato were primarily indigenous and did in fact have preexisting indigenous self-government at the municipal level.

Chapter 3 reinserts haciendas into the scholarship on liberalism. Despite a vast body of work on haciendas and a separate scholarly tradition of research on liberalism, the role of haciendas in the development of liberalism remains unexplored. Despite abuses from landlords and administrators, tenants challenged evictions, arbitrary punishments, and resistance to the formation of self-ruled towns, sometimes with success. Moreover, haciendas were not unilaterally oppressive institutions; rather than "zones of lawlessness" (127), they were zones of refuge.

The following chapter provides an innovative approach to how indigenous communities adapted to liberalism, with a geographic focus on Oaxaca. Schaefer's originality in his analysis is quite evident in this chapter. First, rather than portray the *república de indios* and the corresponding municipal rule as corporate, colonial institutions antithetical to liberalism, he argues that these town councils gave their inhabitants a head start on municipal government, the cornerstone of early liberal rule. Indeed, independence did not sweep away collective landholding and late-colonial corporate traditions such as the *cargo* system. Indigenous commoners and native elites often had distinct and competing interests. Indigenous legal actors appear as individuals rather than parts of an undifferentiated corporate unit. Critically, Schaefer does not attempt to depict indigenous Mexicans as predisposed to liberalism or conservatism, but instead shows how they responded to local conditions.

Despite the period indicated in the book title, 1820 to 1900, most of the book covers the period from Independence to the 1850s. Skimming over the Reforma period, the French Intervention, the Liberal Restoration, and the first 14 years of the Porfiriato, the final chapter examines a much different political situation. The last decade of the nineteenth century exhibited the sharp decline of the liberal, egalitarian early independence era. The temporal leap from the mid nineteenth century to its last decade is a bit disorienting. Unlike previous chapters, in which Schaefer convincingly marshals extensive research to intervene in historiographical debates, this chapter tacks between the recent revisionist trend toward a postmortem rehabilitation of Díaz's rule and what Schaefer terms the "black legend" (181), which emphasizes the arbitrary and roughshod treatment of Mexico's peasants and workers by the Porfiriato's agents. Despite much of his evidence pointing in the other direction, Schaefer hews close to the revisionist perspective.

In sum, the author's examination of liberalism as an egalitarian strain in Mexico's legal culture is worth reading. Written straightforwardly, it is accessible to upper-level undergraduates and graduates alike. Historians of liberalism, Mexico, and legal culture in Latin America will find it insightful. Libraries will do well to purchase copies. It is a significant contribution to legal studies, scholarship on liberalism, and local histories of Latin America.

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HISPANISM

The Spirit of Hispanism: Commerce, Culture, and Identity across the Atlantic, 1875–1936. By Diana Arbaiza. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2020. Pp. x, 244. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00 cloth; \$43.99 eBook.
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Some battles are constantly re-fought. In this elegantly written, carefully researched, and timely book, Diana Arbaiza's interpretation of the cultural dynamics of Hispanism at a time of intense political polarization offers some important new insights into similar struggles elsewhere across place and time. Although much has been written about Hispanism, both as a literary movement and as a political force in the decades leading up to the Spanish Civil War, Arbaiza reminds us that it also promoted a nationalist economic agenda that was rooted in the same anxieties. Even in its own time, it was clear that the political agenda of literary and cultural Hispanists was to create a "discourse of imperial nostalgia," but Arbaiza clearly documents what should have been more obvious all along—that part of that nostalgia was for a colonial-style, extractive, resource-based, closed commercial trade network (3). In other words, Hispanism was