

Christine Hatzky's book seeks to fill the void with a compelling story of the sacrifices of the Cubans in the struggle for sovereignty and independence. The subtitle of the book suggested that a materialist understanding of the world was at play in the South-South cooperation. However, the real theoretical foundations of postmodernism and the stress on memory negated the evidence of the book of real international solidarity on the part of the Cuban peoples in Angola.

The book's 366 pages are laid out in nine chapters, which are organized into three parts: Angola and Cuba in the Twentieth Century, Cuban-Angolan Cooperation in Education, and Memories of Angola. The author has chosen to anchor the book in postmodern discourse and analysis, focusing on spaces and identities, conflict, and memories. These formulations and reference points detract from the central purpose of the book, which intends to bring to the reader the fact that between 1976 and 1991 more than a half million Cubans directly supported the Angolan project of self-determination. Most of those who served in Angola were soldiers; as Hatzky points out, "War was part and parcel of everyday life in Angola" (p. 225).

Of these Cubans, Hatzky focuses on the role of teachers during the military conflict, bringing in exhaustive detail from contemporary records in Angola and from interviews of Cuban doctors, teachers, construction workers, and technicians who worked under very difficult conditions in Cuba. While the book does bring out the real difficulties, the theoretical framework that focuses on memories in the third part contradicts the emphasis on civilian internationalism that the author successfully documents in the second part. An opportunity to soundly anchor the theoretical framework of South-South cooperation and explore the transfer of knowledge was missed. In the universe of Chester Crocker, Christine Messiant, John Marcum, and Joseph Miller, revolutionary cooperation was not possible in a world dominated by possessive individualism. Hence, though Christine Hatzky has offered exhaustive information on the role of education in generating self-confidence and solidarity in the midst of war, her analysis detracts from the information and devalues an otherwise well-researched doctoral thesis.

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*Imperialism and the Origins of Mexican Culture.* By Colin MacLachlan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 340. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$35 cloth. doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.50](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.50)

Focusing through the lens of imperialism, Colin MacLachlan, the John Christy Barr Distinguished Professor History at Tulane University, has written an ambitious account of the creation of *mestizo* culture in sixteenth-century New Spain. Examining imperial organization in four civilizations—Roman, Aztec, Spanish, and Islamic—he charts the formation of the hybrid polity, economy, and society of early colonial Mexico. The

book's far-ranging core chapters consider governing structures, military organization, trade and commerce, and religious beliefs.

Even so, the book embodies a cultural evolutionary perspective that defines indigenous imperial practice as "lesser" in comparison to that of Rome or Spain. It gives greater weight to Spanish culture and imperial practice in the formation of *mestizo* culture in New Spain, even as the author balances deculturation versus cultural survival interpretations of indigenous Mesoamerican cultures.

The story of the rise of the Mexica and the Triple Alliance lies at the center of the book's first chapter on Mesoamerican civilizations. MacLachlan argues that the Mexica and their capital city of Tenochtitlan constituted a "city-based chieftaincy" (p. 41), but in doing so deemphasizes the complexity of the dynastic history and political competition among the basin's city-states, or *altepetl*. The chapter stresses what MacLachlan sees as the "grotesque" nature of Aztec religious practices, especially worship of their pantheon of deities, the evolution from a tribal political structure to that of a chieftaincy, and the expansive yet inflexible nature of the tributary empire over which the Mexica and their Tetzcoaca and Tepaneca partners ruled.

The author observes the dynamism of central Mexico's economy but gives short shrift to the vibrant literary and artistic traditions that characterized the region's urban culture. Declaring the Triple Alliance exhausted and overextended, he relies on postconquest tales of omens of doom that make defeat by the Spanish appear inevitable—finding the purported irrationality of native beliefs more significant than disease—the role of Spanish-indigenous military alliances, or in other instances the introduction of new military techniques against which the Mexica's response, weakened by the loss of crucial allies, could not prevail.

The next chapter introduces the theme of the emergence and structure of the Roman Empire as the base from which Spanish culture and imperialism developed. It contends that the emerging Roman Christianity, with its monotheism, could be only partially implemented among the polytheistic Iberian agrarian peasantry, whose interactions with Roman officials bore similarities to the way "Indo-Mexicans," as the author calls them, would interact with Spanish officials centuries later. The spread of pandemic disease and famine opened the door to the Muslim movement into Iberia, displacing the Visigoths.

The book's third chapter traces Iberian encounters with both Islam and Christianity. MacLachlan clearly describes Iberian Muslim political organization—especially the caliphate established in much of Iberia in 912—for Latin Americanists who may not have read as much world history as he has. The concept of "frontier" comes to the fore in MacLachlan's analysis as he shows how the Castilian monarchy drew established and new Christian peasant communities into a religiously and economically fortified Castilian monarchy. The chapter ends with a discussion of the decline of religious tolerance, the emergence of ideas about *limpieza de sangre*, and the establishment of the Inquisition. The intense, inward-looking Catholicism of Castile that had developed by 1492 would shape that kingdom's actions in the Americas.

Situating his narrative of the conquest in a discussion of legal and moral issues, MacLachlan explores the establishment of governance in New Spain—also conceptualized as a frontier in which Cortés and other settlers, the crown, and missionaries vied for power and control over the wealth, labor, and souls of the indigenous population. In contrast to much ethnohistorical scholarship that emphasizes cultural survival and vitality even amid demographic collapse, the author stresses *congregación*—the relocation of native communities—as destructive to indigenous connections to land and communities, although the effect of the policy was at best ambivalent. He argues, more convincingly, that strong connections to land “embod[ied] the tribal spirit of a village” and influenced the emergence of a dual economic system with external and internal sectors (p. 237).

The complex hybrid culture that emerged from the fusion of Spanish and indigenous elements created both social and psychological rootlessness, according to the author. The political and economic incentives of the imperial system encouraged native elites to become cultural mestizos who benefitted from a new, more dynamic economy. Moving between an emphasis on the cultural rootlessness and losses inherent in the creation of a frontier society and the survival of Mesoamerican indigenous peoples, spiritual practices, and economic production, this chapter represents a wide-ranging synthetic discussion of the establishment of Spanish rule in New Spain and illuminates the region’s integration into the emerging global economy.

The author’s decades of reading and thinking about Mexican history and culture emerge across the chapters. This comparative study of imperialism has much to offer informed general readers, the upper division and graduate classroom, and, more broadly, colonial specialists. Perhaps the ambiguity embedded in the book’s interpretation reflects the limits of a cultural evolutionary framework, but its themes demonstrate both the ambitious nature of the Spanish colonial project in the Americas and the colonial basis for the contemporary cultural complexity of Mexico.

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*We Are Left without a Father Here: Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Postwar Puerto Rico.* By Eileen J. Suárez Findlay. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. Pp. 300. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$89.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.  
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In June 1950, 5,000 working-class Puerto Rican men boarded airplanes and travelled from the island to the sugar beet fields of east central Michigan. Initially, many considered this a great opportunity. However, Operation Farmlift was a tragic disaster.