

and its contribution to the debate about passages from colonial to republican regimes in Spanish America. Like other historians who see that the independent republics required their leaders to invent a new legitimacy, a new political language, and a new social imaginary, Zahler rightly highlights the importance of the efforts made to change political culture. Entering the field from the angle of the law and combing the judicial archives for evidence of the ways in which Venezuela's new republican order altered the behaviour and thinking of its citizens, he uses original material to create a fresh analysis. The strength of the argument rests, of course, on the cases used to document it, and one is not always sure how representative these cases are. Nonetheless, if his court records sometimes seem a slender base for all the conclusions drawn from them, their use puts the reader into closer contact with the ways in which people thought, felt and acted, thereby providing some valuable clues to the ways in which subjects of the king turned themselves into citizens of the republic.

That said, one wonders how deep these changes went. Zahler acknowledges the role of Páez as the key source of stability in the early decades of independence, but perhaps underplays his importance. If people learned to use a new language in the courts, consonant with a constitutional order, one must remember that the new order depended heavily on Páez's prestige and coalition politics. Páez was, as John Lynch calls him in *Caudillos in Spanish America*, a 'consensus caudillo' and when the consensus cracked, caudillos and dictators came again to dominate politics, despite the underlying shifts in political culture inaugurated during the early republic. In political culture, as in much else, old habits die hard.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 47 (2015). doi:10.1017/S0022216X15000152

Juanita De Barros, *Reproducing the British Caribbean: Sex, Gender, and Population Politics after Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), pp. xi + 279, \$32.95; £26.50, pb.

Throughout the era of slavery in the British West Indies, planters, physicians, and imperial and colonial officials alike repeatedly expressed their concerns regarding the health and reproductive capabilities of these colonies' African-descended population. Such fears were far from surprising, as the overwhelming majority of these men and women were enslaved, and thus their ability to work hard and to produce the next generation of labourers for their owners were of paramount importance to the islands' continued prosperity and stability. But, as Juanita De Barros shows in this widely-researched study, following the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, and for more than a century afterwards, similar concerns animated discourses and practices of medicine and public health throughout the region. Abolitionists hoped that the size and health of the freed people's population would prove that slavery had been not merely immoral but inefficient as a labour system, and landowners and public officials hoped to transform liberated Afro-Caribbean men and women from 'unsanitary subjects' to 'sanitary citizens' (p. 10) who would provide a docile and industrious workforce for the islands' plantations in freedom as they had under slavery.

De Barros focuses her attention on three British colonies which, 'taken together, indicate the diverse colonial responses to the population questions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' (p. 5). Jamaica was the largest and most populous

British West Indian possession, Guyana the testing ground of many state endeavours regarding social welfare and public health, and Barbados an alleged 'Little England' (p. 7), supposedly the most recognisably British of all the Caribbean colonies. In these communities, in the century which separated the era of emancipation from that of the labour unrest of the 1930s, De Barros examines official responses to questions of sexuality and reproduction, the persistent image of the Afro-Caribbean woman as an unfit mother, and the desire not only of London officials and local white bureaucrats but of the more affluent and educated members of local black communities to 'uplift the race' (p. 5). In five well-structured chapters, she explores inter-linked questions of demography, infant mortality, reproductive health, and child welfare.

Within three decades of emancipation, British abolitionists were horrified to find that the population of the sugar colonies was falling, rather than increasing. While in reality this decline stemmed primarily from the difficult living conditions of many ex-slaves, exacerbated in the 1860s by a severe outbreak of cholera, many metropolitan observers interpreted it as evidence that these freedmen and women were unable to cope with the challenges of self-determination. Concerns about the security of the labour supply, De Barros argues, combined with belief in the alleged mental and moral inferiority of people of African descent, encouraged government officials, Christian missionaries, and physicians to intervene assertively in many aspects of public health and welfare, particularly those related to sex and child-bearing. These initiatives included dogged attempts to provide a sufficient number of British-trained white midwives to replace the Afro-Caribbean 'granny midwives', practitioners of folk medicine who were the preferred birth attendants of most black women, but whom whites saw as 'filthy and ignorant and not far removed from the jungles of Africa' (p. 69). Once babies were born, their health was to be safeguarded by the 'baby-saving leagues' which were established throughout the Caribbean to instruct supposedly ignorant and irresponsible black mothers on how best to raise their infants; again, it was white British women who were placed in positions of leadership. The reader may be amused by De Barros's account of the early twentieth century phenomenon of the 'annual baby show', a competition which awarded prizes in categories such as 'best conditioned baby' and 'most sensibly-dressed baby' (p. 121), but this seemingly innocuous enthusiasm for safeguarding children's welfare led to a belief that children born out of wedlock were inherently physically and morally damaged, and that their mothers should be sterilised (p. 167).

De Barros argues convincingly that these various initiatives should not be seen entirely as top-down solutions forced by the colonisers onto the colonised. Afro-Caribbean populations are depicted both as resisting these practices, for example by continuing to consult 'granny midwives' rather than British ones, and as supporting them by participating in child-welfare initiatives as a way to prove their own respectability and to raise the overall tone of their society. It would, however, have been worthwhile to have learned more about the tensions which may have developed between these Afro-Caribbean men and women and those whom they deemed to be outside the parameters of respectability. De Barros's study would also have been strengthened had she placed her material within a wider transatlantic framework, by comparing the public health and social welfare policies enacted throughout the British Caribbean with those deployed in relation to impoverished or non-white populations in the metropolis, and also in the United States, where many officials and medical researchers shared these concerns regarding African-American residents

of the rural South. Readers may find themselves speculating about the connection between the negative evaluation of Afro-Caribbean women's sexual behaviour and the anxieties of Victorian Britain regarding the alleged menace posed by prostitutes, or about the desire of both British and American authorities to forcibly sterilise individuals whose moral or mental faculties they deemed insufficient. But despite these limitations in its scope, *Reproducing the Caribbean* is a wide-ranging and important book, one which expertly interweaves the histories of race, sexuality, medicine, and empire in a way which illuminates both the commonalities and the differences between the experiences of the highly diverse British colonies of Jamaica, Barbados, and often-overlooked Guyana. Juanita De Barros has produced a monograph which will be of significant interest to anyone interested in the social and political changes which the British Caribbean underwent in the century following emancipation, as well as to scholars of the history of sexuality, gender and public health.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 47 (2015). doi:10.1017/S0022216X15000164

John McKiernan-González, *Fevered Measures: Public Health and Race at the Texas-Mexico Border, 1848–1942* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. xvi + 416, £71.00, £17.99 pb; \$94.95, \$26.95 pb.

Geography is key in this spirited book, where the Mexico-United States borderlands lie abuzz with the transit of disease, public health officers, soldiers, local and federal authorities of two countries, as well as Mexican, African-American, and white American citizens. The earnestness of the public health interventions implemented highlight three important matters for Latin Americanists: the ubiquity of human mobility in this region, the variety of interventions deployed by the US Public Health Service and the US Marine Hospital Service, and the options available to populations singled out for health surveillance by local medico-political forces.

By the 1840s, the borderlands in McKiernan-González's story had been a part of Mexico far longer than they had been a part of the United States. Mexico's territorial losses in the aftermath of the war in 1848 did little to diminish the influence of Mexicans and people of Mexican descent to the economies of the areas the United States acquired. A new fact of life for Mexican populations in the borderlands, control by US authorities included public health measures cast as 'privileges of citizenship' (p. 17) that evinced levels of intrusiveness and antagonism absent from health authorities' dealings with white Americans living in the same places. Public health officers in Brownsville, Rio Grande City, Laredo, Eagle Pass, and El Paso, key cities in *Fevered Measures*, derived much of their power from their ability to control the mobility of residents and migrant workers alike, with an eye to the danger their potential and actual illnesses might harbour for residents beyond the border.

Smallpox, typhus, and yellow fever are recurrent entities over the near century the book covers. Readers will note the rising authority of US public health officers over this period, thanks to their increased efficacy treating diseases and translating their concerns into medical policies for the provision of vaccines, the fumigation of households, worker quarantines, and the disinfection of individual migrants walking across the border. The choices these experts did not make are as telling as those they made, such as when they opted to tear down the Chihuahuita neighbourhood of El Paso in 1916, upon suspicion of its harbouring typhus, instead of targeting the