

notes, anti-Communist rhetoric “served to legitimize antilabor, and often racist, attempts to block Mexican and Mexican American political advancement” (p. 274). In response, César Chávez’s National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) adopted a strict anti-communist stance. Although this strategy helped the NFWA win the support of Catholic clergymen, it clashed with the radical activism sweeping the Americas in the late 1960s. That radicalism is the subject of Victoria Langland’s “Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails,” which focuses on 1968 Brazil. Analyzing the gendered discourse of social change and repression, Langland finds that “women’s sexuality as a political issue and sexualized views of women political activists merged as one” (p. 310). Especially revealing is her use of advertising images to trace the connection between commercialized tropes of sexual violence and actual torture of suspected female dissidents.

In the final essay, Carlota McAllister explores the complex process of modernization in rural Guatemala. Focusing on the western village of Chupol, she reveals that the post-1954 efforts of the Guatemalan state to draw isolated communities into market relations had unintended consequences. Far from vanquishing local people’s identities, market expansion spurred many to direct opposition, including the espousal of liberation theology and armed struggle. But although McAllister succeeds in connecting revolutionary currents to deeper local histories, she seems to conflate U.S.-sponsored modernization with state violence, noting that “U.S. cold warriors and their Guatemalan friends had another means of ensuring their calculations would prosper when the market failed to do so: genocidal violence” (p. 371).

In sum, the editors have assembled a valuable collection that will prove useful to U.S. diplomatic and Latin American scholars alike. Although Spenser’s critique of the “so-called new Cold War history” as preoccupied with the “bipolar conflict” (p. 381) is debatable, she correctly notes that, “Without the Cold War, Latin America would be a very different place today” (p. 395). By linking the geostrategic aspects of the great power struggle to the cultural and grassroots experience on the ground, *In From the Cold* offers a fresh perspective on Latin America’s Cold War.

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**JULIAN GO: *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008.**

One of the more powerful justifications for American imperialism has been the idea of the “civilizing mission” in which liberal democratic values are transferred

to pre-modern societies. But even if good intentions are granted, the record of culture transfer has been so poor as to give support to conservative arguments that a forced democratization of culture, as currently being attempted in Iraq, is hopeless from the start.

Julian Go's interesting and stimulating book revisits America's imperial past to explore the question of whether and how culture transfer is possible in the (admittedly limited) political sphere by looking at the first decade or so of the American occupations of Puerto Rico and the Philippines in the aftermath of 1898. The story in each case begins with similar expectations and tutelage practices on the part of the occupying Americans and with similar expectations of the elites in the new colonies, viz., that the Americans would sanction and approve existing patron-client patterns of rule that were based on well-established traditions of reciprocity. Interestingly, however, the two societies diverged. Whereas in the Philippines, *caciquismo* continued, albeit in new institutional garb, in Puerto Rico the old elite discarded its paternalist ideology and adopted the democratic values of the occupiers. In the Philippines, the continuation of old ways was reflected in corruption, bribery, vote fraud, political violence, and misuse of the police even in the face of ongoing American attempts to control political misbehavior. In Puerto Rico, in contrast, the adoption of American political forms was reflected in honest elections, a commitment to good government, and a rhetorical devotion to liberal democratic ideals. In one instance, then, we see the domestication of tutelage, while in the other we see genuine cultural transformation.

The explanation for this divergence, according to Go, can be found in the fate of the cultural schemas that the elites brought to their encounter with the Americans. In the Philippines, this schema was not fundamentally challenged, hence the lessons of tutelage were "domesticated," i.e., assimilated into existing cultural patterns. To be sure, political change did take place, for the Americans introduced new and larger scale institutions, but these were dealt with by a reinvention of tradition, by the creation of intermediaries in the patron-client system, and by assigning traditional valences to new offices such as those in the national assembly. Go calls this process a "revaluation" of tradition. In Puerto Rico, however, an economic disaster set off by a hurricane disrupted the old clientelistic patterns of exchange, the emergence of political violence from below threatened the social status of the elites, and the failure to dissuade the Americans from implementing their reformist plans meant that the cultural assumptions under which the elites had been operating were fundamentally overturned by reality. This "convergent and recurrent recalcitrance" of the world led the elite to "problematize" their previous views and to expand their cultural repertoire by adopting the progressive political values of the Yankees.

Go is a sociologist with a pronounced theoretical bent. To explain these developments, he argues that previous views of culture need to be either discarded or at least heavily modified. Thus he rejects the structural-functional approach of rooted values as an approach that might work for domestication but that is poorly suited to explaining cultural change. Moreover, it encounters problems of cultural essentialism and presumes a cultural coherence that may not really be there. Top-down views of cultural imposition run into the reality of resistance and domestication, whereas instrumental views privilege power and do little to illuminate instances where culture transfer does occur. The Geertzian view of culture as a system of meaning is fine for synchronic analyses, but it is of little use in dealing with political and economic change. The new infatuation with discourse, according to Go, substitutes linguistic determinism for cultural determinism. His solution is to define culture as “a semiotic system in practice” that is both “enabling *and* constraining.”

Though this sounds right, as far as culture goes, Go’s explanation of the Puerto Rican case is not fully satisfying. Translated into the language of cultural evolution, he is saying that cultures adapt to their environments. But this strikes me as a lopsidedly environmental explanation that ignores the fact that culture transfer does not always occur under circumstances where cultural schemas encounter real-world barriers. If we look to the experience of Native Americans, for example, or to China’s encounter with western imperialism, we see encounters with reality that produced painful and disastrous denial and/or an inability to adapt. If culture indeed constrains and enables, how specifically did the culture of the Puerto Rican elite enable this cultural shift? Was there something else, like the quality of political leadership, or other factors, singly or in combination, which contributed to the change?

On a few occasions, Go’s assertions outrun the evidence. Take, for example, his conclusion that in Puerto Rico “ostensible success also meant a terrible failure” (p. 294). I doubt that the complex Puerto Rican-American relationship can be summarized in so one-sided a fashion. One can also question the assertion (p. 275) that “If American empire was exceptional at all, it was due more to the exceptional demands of the local elite than to the exceptional character of America’s deep tradition of beliefs.” But it is not clear that the elites were clamoring for tutelage, while it is the case that the American avowal of tutelage for independence in the Philippines was unique at a time when no other imperial power was willing to state such a goal.

Go helps to illuminate the conditions under which culture transfer occurs, but he is not very optimistic about the possibility of developing a social scientific methodology for assuring its success. Though his book is heavily informed by theory, it is a theory that could not have predicted the developments that he

describes. On the contrary, the adoption of American political culture in Puerto Rico was the result of contingent events, the kinds of things that historians are likely to point out – which, as an historian, is one reason why I found the book so enjoyable.

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LAURA GOTKOWITZ: *A Revolution for Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880-1952*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

In this study of Bolivian rural political and social movements, Laura Gotkowitz seeks to stitch together two different historiographic traditions. The older approach discounts or ignores rural unrest before the National Revolution of 1952, but acknowledges peasant activism in the revolution's wake—especially in the department of Cochabamba. A newer interpretation, known as *Katarismo*, emphasizes the combative tendencies of Bolivia's Aymara population and stresses the strength and persistence of rural activism in the decades before the revolution but generally dismisses the changes of 1952 as cosmetic or even pernicious. Gotkowitz's book seeks to illuminate the rural currents that stoked the National Revolution without adopting *Katarismo*'s negative opinion of the revolution's results. To do this, she focuses on two events in the 1940s: Bolivia's 1945 Indigenous Congress and the 1947 rural unrest that followed the overthrow and lynching of President Gualberto Villarroel.

Gotkowitz begins with a consideration of nineteenth-century political debates concerning the compatibility of Bolivia's indigenous population with classically liberal economic and political principles. Next, she examines a favorite topic of *Katarismo* scholarship: the emergence of a network of Quechua and Aymara activists in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s known as the *caciques apoderados*. These individuals sought to represent the interests of the nation's traditional Indian communities and the indigenous population in general. For the years after the disastrous Chaco War (1932-1935), the book describes the political fall-out of the military misadventure and the rise of reformist military leaders and new political parties such as the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR). Gotkowitz notes that the countryside developed into a zone of persistent dispute and debate during this period. In the Quechua-speaking departments of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, and Potosí, a new network of rural activists developed to defend the interests of hacienda laborers: the *Alcaldes Mayores Particulares*. The new network did not always agree with the older association of *caciques apoderados*.