

costado la corrupción, entre 3% y 4% del PBI, entre 30% y 40% del gasto público, uno no puede sino sentir desánimo. Más corruptos los gobiernos cívico-militares, pero no tanto más que los democráticos, la corrupción emerge de este libro como un enorme robo al futuro, un obstáculo mayor para desarrollo, una burla a la esperanza. Quiroz lo ha cuantificado y diseccionado a lo largo del tiempo.

Alguien dijo que no se le hace servicio a un carro alquilado. El problema en el Perú es que sus habitantes, sobre todo si llegan a ejercer poder –lo mismo ocurre con parques, terrenos y otros espacios donde hay una dinámica entre público y privado– es que tratan al país como un carro alquilado. Lo usan, lo aprovechan, lo explotan, no lo cuidan, se roban las piezas antes de que venga otro conductor y se lo quite, lo ponga operacional con algo de maquillaje y... a comenzar de nuevo. ¿Habrá –escribo esta reseña a un mes de las elecciones generales de 2011– una ruptura de los círculos de corrupción?

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MICOL SEIGEL: *Uneven Encounters – Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009.

Race and national identity are dear topics for historians and social scientists of Brazil and the United States. There is a long tradition of academic work that compares the racial and ethnic constructions of the two countries. Micol Seigel's *Uneven Encounters – Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States*, however, goes beyond examining race and national identity within national borders and comparative analysis. The book focuses on the trans-imperial and trans-national connections between historical agents in Brazil and in the United States. This well documented work explores how “coffeemen,” ad men, musicians, performers, and black intellectuals shaped the development of ideas of race and nation in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author examines the social construction of race and nation as intrinsically related to each other and argues that such concepts were constructed within an international context in which African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians actively interacted. Such interactions were uneven in terms of access to resources and wealth, and oftentimes were marked by contradictions. The polemics about race in the United States and in Brazil stimulated nationalistic articulations by black intellectuals and artists. Seigel argues for Afro-Brazilian agency in constructing a racial discourse connected to nationalism that was the origin and critique of what later would be called “racial democracy.”

In order to analyze the multiple levels of trans-national interactions and their consequences, the author examines the construction of ideas of nation and race by drawing on sources from diverse fields such as advertising (coffee advertisements specifically), dance, music, vaudeville, newspapers, and public monuments. This varied material is analyzed from a trans-national perspective. Chapter one focuses on elites and middle class “consumerist citizens” in the United States; it shows how advertising for the coffee industry shaped U.S. attitudes about Brazil. Racial ideas about Brazil as an exotic nation are understood as they operated within the framework of imperialism, as well as how they reinforced racial attitudes within the United States. This well researched chapter also fills a gap in the history of coffee as a commodity. The second chapter examines the significance of Maxixe as a dance and its international visibility. Here, the author makes explicit the importance of exoticism and the trans-national artistic circuit, including Paris, as a key element in shaping ideas of blackness in the United States and in Brazil. The status that black musicians, rhythms, and dances gained through success in cosmopolitan centers of culture abroad led to their recognition within their respective countries.

The following chapter brings the focus of analysis to Rio de Janeiro. Here, the author explores the interaction of Afro-Brazilian and jazz musicians, as well as other foreign travelers, benefiting from the “Negro vogue” in Europe and North America to highlight the emergence of blackness as a constituent part of Brazilian identity. Seigel convincingly argues that success and recognition abroad improved the status of black art and performers in Brazil. Chapter four deals with the opening of stages for black performers in the United States and the role that exoticism played in such a process. The emergence of black performers and artistic companies was tied to their portrayal of “orientalism” and things foreign (mostly from France) that allowed these artists to step outside the category of “black.”

In the fifth chapter, Seigel moves from culture to journalism and examines the interactions between black journalists from Chicago and São Paulo. Such interactions were marked by lack of understanding, ignorance, and untranslatable ethnic concepts. The intense dialogue of black intellectuals led to constant comparisons based on superficial appropriations of race relations in each country, and fostered black intellectual nationalism rather than a diaspora identity. Out of this transnational dialogue, Seigel identifies the creation of the roots and the critique of the idea that later would be called “racial democracy by São Paulo’s black intellectuals.” The final chapter uses controversies about the public monument to the Black Mother (honoring slave wet nurses) in São Paulo to explore gender and racial constructions in Brazil and in the United States. Although the author’s analysis about gender doesn’t present the strength of the previous sections, the

examination of the dialogue and debates about the monument to the Black Mother in the black presses of both countries in the 1920s richly illustrates the misunderstandings and confusions involved in these trans-national dialogues about race and nation. Once again, ignorance and untranslatable concepts between two distinct and unequal societies fueled Afro-Brazilian journalists' conceptualization of blackness within nationalism rather than a diasporic African identity.

The author very carefully defines the concepts and the words being deployed (e.g.: trans-imperial, trans-national, race, blackness, globalization, and imperialism), and clearly places emphasis on the trans-Atlantic dimension of the processes being examined. *Uneven Encounters* rescues the agency of Afro-Brazilians and African-Americans in shaping ideas about race and nation in a trans-national context. Scholars of the Atlantic world have long paid attention to the crucial role of Africans, African-Americans, and Afro-Brazilians who enjoyed high geographical mobility and were active in influencing debates about race and abolitionism (e.g., Olaudah Equiano, Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua, Andre Reboucas, to cite just the most famous cases). Like their counterparts of the previous centuries, people of African descent were still traveling in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their trajectories and options affected the way in which race and nation were constructed beyond the limits of each nation state.

Micol Siegel does a commendable job in reintroducing agents of African descent into the forefront of the historical process of race and nation formation. In choosing to emphasize the connections between racial and national identity-building processes in Brazil and in the United States – and not merely to compare one to the other – Siegel does not reject previous scholarship, but rather fills a gap in historical knowledge regarding the significance and trajectories of middle-class and subaltern Afro-Brazilian agents that had been vastly ignored by authors influenced by national narratives and institutions. As the author emphasizes, by constantly using the terms “trans-imperial and trans-national,” the world in which the agents of these uneven interactions lived was not yet dominated by nations and nationalism, but was still a world where empires and nations were competing and national identities were being forged. The growth of United States imperialism permeates the analysis through the constant emphasis on the unequal access to wealth and resources between African-Brazilians and African-Americans, hence the very title of the book.

This well researched study ties together race and nation as crucial elements in the development of Brazilian society and emphasizes trans-national connections rather than comparisons. Nevertheless, more information about the social and institutional realities surrounding the artists and journalists in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo would help readers to gauge the significance and scope of this historical process. Furthermore, the absence of other important Brazilian urban

centers in the analysis, such as Recife and Salvador, is problematic, specifically due to the importance of Brazilian northeastern regionalism and intellectuals in the formulation of the “myth” of racial democracy.

*Uneven Encounters* is a well crafted study and will certainly provoke debate, since it takes historians and social scientists out of their comfort zone provided by nation-centered perspectives. The book can be assigned for graduate and undergraduate level classes (for undergrads, the chapters about coffee, dance, and music will certainly work better). *Uneven Encounters* will provide stimulating reading for students of race, ethnicity, and nation building in Latin America and in the United States.

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JAMES P. WOODWARD: *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigniorial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.

How is it that exclusionary political regimes are sustained for extended periods and then suddenly collapse without significant levels of resistance? The experiences pertaining to the regime known as the Old Republic (1889 to 1930) in Brazil provide an interesting case-study for revisiting this sort of theme. These experiences become particularly illuminating for such a revision when examined under the prism of the abundantly researched and elegantly written *A Place in Politics*.

Reinterpreting the political trajectory of São Paulo during the transformative years of the Old Republic, Woodward rebukes the prevailing historiography on the period for being excessively grounded either on the internal strife of regional political elites or on the tangential emergence of new social actors (e.g., the rise of a national middle class). For the author, neither position could aptly account for the abrupt collapse of São Paulo’s hegemony as the main power broker in Brazilian politics until, at least, the third decade of the twentieth century.

The book offers an inclusive look that is both localized (focused on local towns across the state of São Paulo) and multidimensional, as the book examines heretofore unknown but important political players. In fact, tagging along a new line of studies showing that the *Café com Leite* pact—the political alliance established between the two richest and electorally most important states, São Paulo and Minas Gerais—was much more difficult to maintain, Woodward ably demonstrates how the logic supporting the entire political system of the period operated on the basis of much deeper social roots spreading across several politi-