

Pian del Carpine, Odoric De Pordenone, and Ibn Battuta, which described Chinese iron and other metal achievements of Asian empires. Lastly, the silver mines of the Balkans, a major source of revenues that allowed the Ottoman Empire to absorb the costs of military campaigns against the Spanish Empire in the Mediterranean, seem to have had no influence upon Iberian mining language.

In the task of bringing back to life the mining languages of non-European conquered peoples, the book neglects the mining languages of the Afro-Eurasian regions that challenged Iberian imperial aspirations. This central problem of the book stems from its lack of a world-history perspective that the study of mining demands. This perspective is the safest path to our building a history and theory of mining capable of explaining the mining evolution of non-European lands into colonial, dependent, capitalist peripheries of the world economy. Understanding economic change in the mining peripheries of the world continues to be one the greatest challenges of social scientific inquiry. Addressing this challenge certainly requires sensibility and awareness of how European “learned and scientific” mining language was and remains a contested territory. But it also demands greater scrutiny of the historically limited nature of explanations based upon “race” and “racialized languages”. Perhaps Bigelow, who demonstrates knowledge of the vast Iberian literary canon on colonial mining, will pursue some of the inquiries mentioned above, abandoning the Iberian focus for a world-history perspective. I hope her future work sheds light upon the material basis of mining languages beyond Iberian empires and in relation to capital accumulation on a world scale.

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HYNSON, RACHEL. *Laboring for the State. Women, Family, and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959–1971*. [Cambridge Latin American Studies, Vol. 117.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2019. xvii, 314 pp. Ill. £29.99. (E-book: \$32.00.)

Hynson’s work focuses on the attempts of post-revolutionary Cuban governments to design a project of social engineering in various areas related to women, motherhood, and the family between 1959 and 1971. These projects did not overlook attempts to impose a “respectable” morality that often contradicted the speeches, manifestos, and dictates drawn up by these same authorities, in which they declared the transformation of the bourgeois models that had prevailed in Cuban society before the revolution.

We could situate this work in a line of studies promoted by authors such as Lillian Guerra (*Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959–1971* (2012)), Michelle Chase (*Revolution Within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952–1962* (2015)), and Elise Andaya (*Conceiving Cuba: Reproduction, Women, and the State in the Post-Soviet Era* (2014)). These works mix analytical perspectives – to varying degrees – from various social sciences, from anthropology to history.

Hynson analyses the deployment of initiatives promoted from different spheres and institutions of the Cuban state aimed at extending and consolidating a model of the home considered acceptable by the revolutionary state on a heteronormative basis rooted in male primacy. The ideal of the “New Man” implicitly carried an ideal of the “New Family” and, far from eroding the Eurocentric nuclear family model – which some highlighted as a fundamental objective to be destroyed by Fidel Castro’s regime – the state, as Hynson shows, merely reproduced that same model. The supposed socialist family model which, it was said, they aspired to implement did not translate into the programmes developed by the state: the nuclear family remained the “respectable” model on which to build society. The ideal of the “New Family” continued to be based on the traditional breadwinner model in which the man provided economic support for the family, worked in a job/occupation regulated (or accepted) by the state itself. The man had a heterosexual partner, who, as a woman, had to abide by the reproductive and labour guidelines laid down by the state itself, in which a link was established between morality and work.

The author’s analysis of these initiatives of the revolutionary Cuban state focuses on four programmes implemented throughout the 1960s: the reproductive control of women; the legalization of marriage for “informal” couples; the eradication of prostitution; and the linking of male household heads to occupations that the state placed under its control. Each of these programmes, individually or as a whole, reproduced a gender ideology in which moralizing discourses were combined with an alleged social engineering, seasoned with the projection of a supposed revolutionary ideal in which what was moral and acceptable was what the state itself provided.

Thus, in the first chapter, Hynson focuses on analysing the measures put in place to regulate Cuban women’s fertility with the explicit aim of reducing the number of abortions. Although these measures were surrounded by a whole discourse of liberation and female empowerment, their implementation resulted in quite the opposite: it was the medical establishment, not the women themselves, that ultimately decided whether a pregnancy could be terminated. Moreover, as Hynson repeatedly emphasizes, the regulation of abortion was accompanied by a series of non-explicit objectives related to the racialization of the measures imposed: the main target was women from rural areas, from poorer backgrounds, who were generally non-white.

In the second chapter, the author focuses on the family model that the Cuban state tried to impose as normative. “Operation Marriage” was designed to regularize the large number of Cuban couples whose relationships were without legal recognition. To this end, mass celebrations were promoted, spaces were made available for couples to hold ceremonies, and material benefits were offered to those who accepted regularization. This measure was accompanied by “Operation Registry”, with the aim of incorporating into the Civil Register all those Cubans who were not registered. Here again, Hynson highlights the social and gender-based nature of the measure in order to extend political control and consolidate the power of the state itself. On the one hand, rural areas were the main target of these programmes, especially in those regions where sympathies with the counterrevolution were deepest; on the other, this reinforced the ideal of the

respectable family mentioned previously, in which a gender hierarchy was imposed in which male authority prevailed over female labour.

The third chapter focuses on programmes aimed at eradicating prostitution. It highlights the different perceptions of the implications of economically mediated sexual relations. As this book points out, for some of the women involved it was a means of earning a livelihood, of obtaining resources that allowed them to live in conditions otherwise difficult to achieve. Faced with this, the state that emerged from the revolution put forward a discourse in which prostitutes were victims of capitalist exploitation, of the conditions of misery that capitalism had generated, and which claimed that women had been forced into prostitution by socioeconomic conditions. Later, in the face of the resistance that officials encountered, a discourse was developed based on the criminalization of women (“criminal demonstrations”), who went against the principles of socialism and to which they were not committed. It is also worth noting Hynson’s assessment of the multiple meanings that the authorities conferred on the term “prostitute”, encompassing all those women who transgressed and did not conform to the moral, family, and labour model that the state tried to impose.

The last chapter analyses forced labour as a means of eradicating not only political dissidence but also all those practices that resisted the models that the state itself considered morally acceptable within the framework of the revolutionary socialist ideal. The author focuses on the use of forced labour as a mechanism for imposing on men the labour standards that the state established as normative.

These four chapters highlight the tensions that arose when it came to imposing the aforementioned measures between state authoritarianism and the resistance (generally seen in terms of individual attitudes) that developed among the Cuban population. The author should perhaps have gone on to develop her approach in relation to the debate on the extent to which these individual manifestations, related to personal implications, can be considered resistance. The concept of everyday resistance, developed in the mid-1980s by James C. Scott, as the weapon of the weak could perhaps have served as a framework for these approaches. In this regard, the author could have included the counter-narratives that citizens were spreading and which, on occasion, forced governments to respond.

Throughout the book, Hynson offers an analysis of how the reform programmes proposed by the Cuban revolutionary authorities between 1959 and 1971 were constructed according to the cultural ingredients of a white elite, with profound racial and social implications, elaborating a suggestive reinterpretation of sexuality and the question of gender in the formulation of a supposedly socialist state that aspired to overcome the bourgeois and capitalist model.

Laboring for the State is, in short, in line with those works that question the Cuban government’s self-congratulatory account of its own revolution, blaming the failures of its policies on Cubans’ (or at least some Cubans’) lack of commitment to the revolution. When this transfer of responsibility was not possible, the state itself erased the past, diluting it as if it had never existed.

Finally, it is worth trying to insert Hynson’s analysis within broader reflections on “the revolutionary” nature of the Cuban state after 1959, the weight of liberal principles in the early Fidelista programme, and the 1940 Constitution as the framework

within which the projected transformations could be carried out. Rafael Rojas's reflections on the concept of revolution in Cuba can help shed light on the confluence of different ideological traditions on which the proposals for change were based, however contradictory they may have been.

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HARRIS, JOHN. *The Last Slave Ships*. New York and the End of the Middle Passage. Yale University Press, New Haven (CT) [etc.] 2020. ix, 300 pp. Ill. Maps. € 30.00.

In May 2019, it was widely reported that the wreck of the transatlantic slave ship, *Clotilda*, had been discovered in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, just north of the city of Mobile in Alabama. The *Clotilda* has long been thought to be the last transatlantic slaving ship to have arrived in the American South. It had lain in the mud since 1860. After 124 captive Africans had disembarked, illegal traffickers sailed away into the night and torched the vessel to cover their backs. The location of the wrecked vessel confirmed concretely for today's descendants of the *Clotilda*'s African captives what they have always known but which had long been questioned. Widespread reporting of the discovery also further interrupted the dominant American national narrative that has hitherto remembered the role of the United States in the transatlantic trafficking of African lives as closing with the federal ban of 1808.

W.E.B. Du Bois detailed the ineffectiveness of the 1808 Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves in his *The Suppression of the African Slave-trade to the United States* in 1894. His classic study was published less than forty years after the *Clotilda* arrived in Alabama, however, it is only recently that historians have increasingly turned their attention to the ways in which the transatlantic slave trade continued to flourish during the nineteenth century. *The Last Slave Ships* makes a major contribution to the scholarly field. As Harris notes, early on in his fine study, nearly four million Africans were forced aboard slave ships between the beginning of the century and the early 1860s, about one third of all captives who endured the Middle Passage crossing (p. 3). The trafficking of captive Africans bound for the plantations in the Americas had been outlawed by all nations by 1836 but it nevertheless continued albeit re-shaped and muddled by successive bans, treaties, and prohibitive penalties. During this "illegal" period, the promise of huge profits, various efforts at maritime suppression – notably by Britain – and the geopolitical chauvinism of the United States, helped to shape the murky contours of an often ambiguous, and ambivalently policed, maritime trade in captive African peoples.

The fate of the *Clotilda* bookends *The Last Slave Ships* and the study focuses on the closing decade of this criminal enterprise, by which time international suppression efforts had dispersed the Atlantic-wide community of slavers. The study does not