

countryside. At times, Puente presents state and non-state involvement as a peculiarly twentieth-century phenomenon, while at other points he recognises the roles of earlier colonial and republican governments and economies in reorganising rural life. Further study is required to clarify just how stark a departure the last century makes from previous efforts, or whether they constitute an entrenching of a much older relationship between broader political economies and agrarian populations. Likewise, it would be interesting to see just how far efforts to transform the countryside went beyond the written word of legislation, government bureaucrats or political actors. All case studies, of course, are limited by scope and availability of sources. And Puente offers some very suggestive examples of how the people of Ondores engaged with top-down attempts to alter rural life. But to see just how deep rural changes went beyond compliance of community legislation, to take one example, further bottom-up evidence from the perspective of rural populations is necessary. But these are additional intrigues. Scholars interested in Peruvian history, indigeneity and agrarian studies will learn much from Puente's book. This reader certainly did.

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Shawn William Miller, *The Street is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro*

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In recent years, the history of automobility in Latin America has sparked growing scholarly interest. Historians have explored the formation of early car culture and the role that cars and roads played in modernisation projects in Latin American countries. Yet, there is very little historical research on the critical aspects of automobility, such as the automobile's environmental consequences, road safety and the social conflicts that emerged with the spread of the car. This historiographical lacuna is astonishing, given that cars have long been omnipresent in daily life in Latin American cities. Shawn William Miller's book *The Street is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro* offers a much-needed critical and comprehensive analysis of automobility's impact on urban life in Brazil's former capital city. Miller examines how the automobile transformed the street 'from a meaningful place for sociality, commerce, and leisure to a space of darting and death' (p. 4). He argues that the car was a tool of class violence whose benefits went to a motorised social elite. The car's velocity, potential for destruction and massive occupation of space, even when not in motion, forced other street users aside.

The book is structured into an introduction, seven main chapters and a conclusion. Miller dedicates the first two main chapters to the pre-automotive era. In Chapter 1, he gives a vivid description of street life in Rio de Janeiro in colonial times and the nineteenth century. One would not expect such a detailed discussion of urban life before the car in a book on automobility, but it is precisely this delving into the more distant past that allows us to understand how profoundly the arrival of the automobile impacted urban societies and how disruptive it was. Before the car, the street was a common space that belonged to no one in particular. City residents used it for commerce, sociality and play. Miller does not gloss over the fact that the street was also a place where people quarrelled and committed violent crimes. In Chapter 2, he shows that the question of what the street was for caused conflict before the dawn of the automobile. One of the most remarkable incidents was the strike by the city's handcart workers in 1903 who protested the exclusive use of rails by a private tram company. Quite different from what happened later, the city sided with the carters, prioritising public space over private interests, and giving pedestrians spatial priority over vehicles. As Miller notes, the street was still seen as a place for people on foot (p. 94).

In Chapter 3 Miller shows how Rio de Janeiro became ever more dominated by cars in the 1910s and 1920s. For their upper-class owners who claimed an exclusive right to the street, cars were markers of social differentiation. For the unmotorised majority they brought pollution, displacement, injury and death. Miller claims that public opposition to the automobile rarely went beyond complaints and caricature. This underestimates the intensity of resistance and it is inconsistent with his observation in the same chapter that by the 1920s 'the battle lines in what would be a long territorial conflict had been definitely drawn' (p. 105). Indeed, debates over who belonged on the street and who did not were highly controversial. Accidents often resulted in heated arguments between drivers and pedestrians which often included physical violence, an aspect that Miller addresses in Chapter 4. Newspapers defended pedestrians for some time but changed sides by the 1930s. More and more people accepted the idea that auto-related deaths were an inevitable price of modernity. As Miller shows in Chapter 5, many hoped that legislators and law enforcement would help solve traffic mayhem, but to little avail. In fact, empty promises of a safer future thwarted stricter regulation of automotive movement. Miller leaves readers with the sobering conclusion that elites shaped the law and then acted with impunity. No less sobering is his observation that 'automobility as a system of movement was catastrophic everywhere it was introduced' and that the car's catastrophic statistics continue to 'overpower most of safety's gains' up to this day (pp. 226–7).

Miller offers a fresh perspective on automotive history by unearthing sources that allow us to hear the voices of the automobile's detractors who have been largely ignored by historians, at least in the case of Brazil. As he explains in Chapter 6, 'an exceptional blast by prominent voices against national automobilism' (p. 252) came in the mid-1950s, a time when most people assumed that the car had very few foes. Starting in 1954, the editors of *Revista de Automóveis* invited prominent writers to pen short essays for their automobile magazine, but they certainly did not expect them to address 'the way automobiles seemed to exacerbate the already entrenched problem of social inequality and further divided, indeed, isolated the classes from

one another' (p. 257). Miller also uses samba lyrics as sources to analyse popular perceptions of the street. Samba musicians did not address the car directly, but they mourned the loss of public spaces that were destroyed in the context of highway construction, especially after 1940. Urban highways accelerated the demise of street life and so did congestion and the use of public squares for free parking. As Miller argues in Chapter 7, the full revolution of automobility depended on the availability of space where the increasing number of private cars could be stored at no cost. In the mid-1960s, Rio's director of transportation, Francisco Américo Fontenelle, tried to fight the growing chaos by pedestrianising some downtown streets and enforcing parking restrictions. Miller's discussion of Fontenelle's work is a bit lengthy; he probably gives this episode more attention because it was one of the very few moments when drivers could not take privilege for granted.

The Street is Ours is a thoroughly researched and highly readable book. Some questions come to mind that are not fully answered and deserve further examination. For example: What role did automotive businesses play in the social construction of automobile hegemony in urban Brazil? To what extent was urban highway construction in Rio de Janeiro a racist undertaking? Nevertheless, Miller's book is pathbreaking and it will hopefully inspire similar studies on other Latin American cities.

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Carlos Contreras Carranza, *Historia económica del Perú: Desde la conquista española hasta el presente*

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In his book *Historia económica del Perú: Desde la conquista española hasta el presente*, Carlos Contreras Carranza seeks to paint a comprehensive picture of Peru's economic history by addressing two questions that are frequently asked in Latin American studies. Firstly, why has Peru, along with other countries in the region, been unable to attain much-coveted economic progress? And secondly, to what degree has the colonial legacy contributed to this outcome?

To answer the above questions, Contreras systematically analyses the following variables over a period of 500 years: (i) the population in Peru; (ii) the export sector (natural resources) and its links with the domestic economy; (iii) fiscal and monetary policies; and (iv) institutional changes (i.e. property rights). The analysis of these last two variables constitutes the book's most significant contribution because it deals with little-explored topics in Peruvian economic history and because they emphasise the analysis of endogenous development factors. Likewise, Contreras