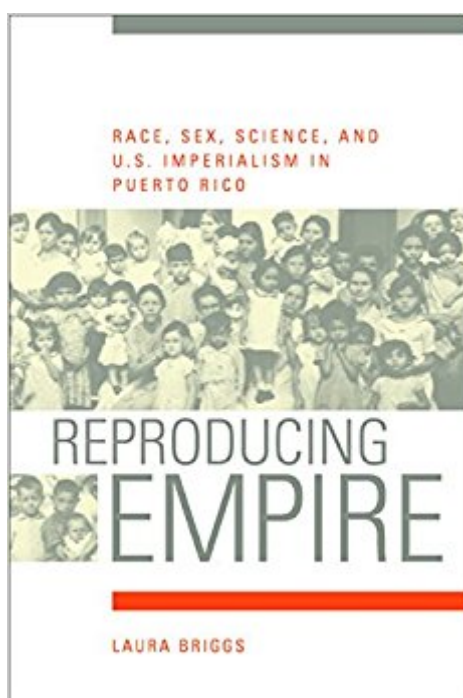


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# Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, And U.S. Imperialism In Puerto Rico



## Synopsis

Original and compelling, Laura Briggs's *Reproducing Empire* shows how, for both Puerto Ricans and North Americans, ideologies of sexuality, reproduction, and gender have shaped relations between the island and the mainland. From science to public policy, the "culture of poverty" to overpopulation, feminism to Puerto Rican nationalism, this book uncovers the persistence of concerns about motherhood, prostitution, and family in shaping the beliefs and practices of virtually every player in the twentieth-century drama of Puerto Rican colonialism. In this way, it sheds light on the legacies haunting contemporary debates over globalization. Puerto Rico is a perfect lens through which to examine colonialism and globalization because for the past century it has been where the United States has expressed and fine-tuned its attitudes toward its own expansionism. Puerto Rico's history holds no simple lessons for present-day debate over globalization but does unearth some of its history. *Reproducing Empire* suggests that interventionist discourses of rescue, family, and sexuality fueled U.S. imperial projects and organized American colonialism. Through the politics, biology, and medicine of eugenics, prostitution, and birth control, the United States has justified its presence in the territory's politics and society. Briggs makes an innovative contribution to Puerto Rican and U.S. history, effectively arguing that gender has been crucial to the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, and more broadly, to U.S. expansion elsewhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Laura Briggs has given us a very smart book. She's opened my eyes to Puerto Rican women's centrality to the entire American imperial enterprise. Pay attention to prostitution--debates about it, maneuvers to control it, reliance on it--and we'll gain a more realistic sense of political life. Briggs shows us how true that is. I'm going to recommend this book to everyone."--Cynthia Enloe, author of *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*"A superb analysis of how U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico had profound effects on sex, gender, and racial formations in both nations. Briggs sets new standards for the study of race and gender in U.S. women's history."--Peggy Pascoe, University of Oregon

"Laura Briggs has given us a very smart book. She's opened my eyes to Puerto Rican women's centrality to the entire American imperial enterprise. Pay attention to prostitution--debates about it, maneuvers to control it, reliance on it--and we'll gain a more realistic sense of political life. Briggs shows us how true that is. I'm going to recommend this book to everyone."--Cynthia Enloe, author of *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*"This book not only brings a significant original contribution to the analyses and understanding of an important period in Puerto Rican history, it also brings rich and original information and perspectives to gender, cultural, and sociological studies. While reading it, I felt amazed by its solid documentation and fresh analysis of a period that has been 'studied' extensively, but in a very traditional way. The book brings sharp understanding to the past, and also builds links to the present and future, clearly showing its pertinence and relevance for scholars, students and the general public."--Yamila Azize-Vargas, author of *La mujer en la lucha (History of Puerto Rican Feminism, 1898-1930)*"A superb analysis of how U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico had profound effects on sex, gender, and racial formations in both nations. Briggs sets new standards for the study of race and gender in U.S. women's history."--Peggy Pascoe, University of Oregon

Title says it all. Must read book! Very helpful in understanding this specific topic. I would recommend it to anyone.

This is everything a book should be. It's a historical, narrative case study about the politics of colonialization in Puerto Rico. However, it reveals deeper truths about the U.S.'s politics of reproduction as a weapon. There is no sense coming out of this book other than how f'ed it was. Both sides and all sides who dealt in Puerto Rican politics; whether they be nationalists, feminists, liberal or paternal, were so wrong and self serving. Morality served as a weapon, liberation a guise

and nationalism a power grab; Briggs does an excellent job pointing out the complexity of oppression and how even liberal rhetoric serves its role. This case study of Puerto Rican colonization through women's reproduction speaks to the depths of oppression by the U.S. It was complex, it's not light reading but if you want deeper understanding of the nature of oppression and politics than it is so worth it.

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