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ABSTRACTS


This dissertation examines the role that press scandals played in Mexican politics between 1960 and 1988. It argues that, while political corruption was commonplace, journalists determined which transgressions would become flashpoints for public protest. By creating scandals, print journalists shaped debates about Mexico’s democracy. As scandals circulated through national media, they catalyzed critical reassessments of regime legitimacy and gave public opinion greater weight in shaping processes of political decision-making. By forging new linkages between reading publics and ruling elites, reporters created an increasingly mediated form of Mexican citizenship. Scandals not only reflected elite dissent, but also sharpened internal party divisions that eventually led to organized opposition in 1988 against the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which held the Mexican presidency and most public offices for seventy-one years. This study makes use of new materials from journalists’ private archives, including leaked documents, correspondence, and newsroom memoranda, to challenge prevailing notions of a supine Mexican press. Government documents, such as congressional records and domestic intelligence reports, further illustrate the ways in which political scandals sparked intense debate and sharpened internal party rivalries. These sources reveal that print journalism represented a key site of dissent, debate, and division during Mexico’s political opening.

Brian Shott, “Mediating America: Black and Irish Press and the Struggle for Citizenship, 1870-1914”

This study explores the lives of four African American and Irish American editors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—Father Peter C. Yorke, T. Thomas Fortune, J. Samuel Stemons, and Patrick Ford—and how they understood and advocated for group interests through their newspaper presses. Unlike many newspaper studies, I ask how the medium itself—as a site of labor and profit; via advertisements, images and page layout; and by way of its evolving conventions and technologies—shaped and constrained editors’ roles in debates over race and citizenship during a tumultuous time of social unrest and imperial expansion. Newspapers’ relationship to nationalism has been explored; less attention has been paid to their role in expanding or, conversely, policing, notions of citizenship within the nation.

Ford’s struggle to calibrate Irish nationalism, Catholicism, and labor rights within the columns of the Irish World; Yorke’s clash with big business and his own Catholic hierarchy while at the helm of the Monitor and the Leader; Stemons’s Philadelphia quest to found a newspaper and address the “Negro Problem”; and T. Thomas Fortune’s Pacific journey help tease out newspapers’ role in the creation of racial, ethnic, and national identities in the long nineteenth century.


This thesis is concerned with the ways in which Ebony magazine sought to recover, popularise and utilise black history between the late 1950s and the late 1980s. The dominant scholarly approach to Ebony has focused on the magazine’s bourgeois values and visual aesthetics, and has ignored its importance as a creator and disseminator of black history. By contrast, I highlight the multiple ways in which black history became central to Ebony’s content from the late 1950s onwards, and how this shift was quarterbacked by Lerone Bennett, Jr., the magazine’s senior editor and in-house historian. Rooted in my unique access to Bennett’s unprocessed papers at Chicago State University and other key archival holdings, this thesis sheds new light on the work of Bennett, on Ebony’s significance as a ‘history book’ for millions of readers, and on the magazine’s place at the centre of post-war debates in the form and function of African-American history. Far from viewing Ebony as a peripheral to or simply reflective of popular debates into the black past, I place the magazine at the heart of contestations between the corporate, philosophical and political uses of black history during the second half of the twentieth century.