

dissent, and the ways state officials tried to rule and discipline peoples' mimetic actions. Here, Bowen introduces the concept of the "mimetic public sphere" to demonstrate "that communication was understood as the propagation not of ideas or messages but of actions and behaviors" (144).

I would be hesitant to characterize the book as "the *first* detailed exploration of how ordinary actors in revolutionary Spanish America both produced and reacted to an antagonistic and profaned political landscape" (6); there is a rich Latin American scholarship that has analyzed what Elias Palti characterized as the fractious politics of nineteenth-century Latin America—expressed in a fragmented public opinion and contested political scenarios. However, I believe that Bowen makes a crucial contribution by offering an original and meticulous study of the profound connections that exist between communication and politics; he encourages us to look beyond the war of newspapers and pay close attention to how different groups exchanged gestures, behaviors, objects, and actions as they debated visions of their present and future realities.

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## POLICING, COURTS, AND PRISONS IN THE US SOUTHWEST

*Borders of Violence and Justice: Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Law Enforcement in the Southwest, 1835–1935.* By Brian D. Behnken. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022. Pp. 312. \$99.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper; \$22.99 e-book.  
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Brian Behnken presented a richly researched narrative about the history of policing, courts, and prisons in the US Southwest. In this book, he finds that Mexican-origin and Mexican American people were not merely victims of mob justice or brutal white supremacist organizations and their law enforcement enablers. Instead, Behnken shows how marginalized ethnic groups deployed different strategies to contest power in the borderlands, including becoming police officers themselves. Moreover, Behnken's research uncovers how this process did not begin with the professionalization of police departments during the mid-twentieth century, but rather was deeply rooted in the region's past. The author identifies compelling evidence dating to the mid-nineteenth century of the role of Mexican Americans participating in law enforcement as a means to protect their communities from white Anglo aggression in Texas and elsewhere.

Behnken draws on William Deverell's notion of the "unending Mexican war" to understand how after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 formally ended hostilities with Mexico, a chaotic process of violent US colonization continued. The author shows that policing and law enforcement were embedded in this project, where

white Anglo settler officials saw themselves as members of the “civilizing mission” of Manifest Destiny in what became the American Southwest. In this way, the book connects to the broader literature of Borderlands history, ranging from Pablo Mitchell’s work on Indian schools, Neil Foley on agricultural production, or Alexandra Minna Stern on public health; policing was another institution to project settler colonial power.

The fear of the “other” was connected to suspicions around Mexican-origin and Mexican American people. Anglo settlers perceived them as prone to banditry, and thus persecuted them for it. Behnken offers the example of the US customs agent and former Texas Ranger Joe Sitter, who decided without proof to arrest the Mexican-origin man Chico Cano for being an outlaw. The idea of the “Mexican bandit” was repeatedly used by Texas Rangers and other policing groups to attack, arrest, and victimize Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

In the face of legal and extralegal assaults, marginalized groups fought back. The sheer number of primary sources Behnken accessed for his book allows him to develop a thorough narrative of how people used the courts, police, and other measures to defend their communities. One of the most prominent individuals whom Behnken features in this story is Henry Garfias, a Mexican American law enforcement officer in the mid-nineteenth century. Garfias served as an important legal and local go-between for Mexicans and Mexican Americans in their dealings with state power. He was able to help people avoid mob attacks and push back against the worst examples of racist policing. In addition to this one, Behnken tells several other stories of how people became involved in law enforcement; he tracked the contours of their careers as some went from outlaw to police officer, while others served themselves more than their communities. In doing so, Behnken shows how Mexican American law enforcement officers did not represent a cultural or social monolith, but rather were riven with complex reasons (good, bad, and in between) for participating in policing organization. To build his historical narrative, Behnken draws on court documents and other official correspondence that detail decades of police interactions.

There are two critiques that need to be made of Behnken’s book. First, it appears that he tries to use as many of the cases found in the archives as possible; consequently, in some parts, the narrative becomes overly descriptive. There is very little signposting to guide readers, and the analysis becomes thin as a result. Instead, readers can be overwhelmed by the number of examples the author tries to fit into the text. The better internal organization within the chapters to provide sub-sections and a little more analysis would have helped the text. Second, Behnken admits this is only part of the broader story of law enforcement in the region; he intends to write a second volume covering the middle and latter decades of the twentieth century. Therefore, he ends this book in the 1930s, leaving many important historical episodes and police reforms for the next volume. Hopefully it arrives quickly as there is still much to be covered and appreciated in the *longue durée* of historical trends around policing in the US Southwest.

In conclusion, Behnken provides a compelling history of the region as understood through its law enforcement institutions. The book is well researched and provides a narrative that is focused on many individual actors and their impact on policing. Scholars and students of Borderlands history will find this book to be an important part of their study of the American Southwest.

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### ABOLITION, MODERNIZATION, AND INCARCERATION

*Policing Freedom: Illegal Enslavement, Labor, and Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century Brazil.*

By Martine Jean. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

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Martine Jean opens her book with four mid-nineteenth-century photographs of prisoners from Rio de Janeiro's penitentiary system. The images reveal unsmiling, stern faces, staring determinedly, even defiantly, at something just to the side of the photographer (or the viewer). Though reminiscent of other collections of nineteenth-century photographic portraits, and to some extent of contemporary photographic self-portraits (or selfies), these images had a very distinct purpose. Rather than record a carefully curated representation of the self—as was the case with Frederick Douglass's many photographs—they were part of a state registry that aimed to render legible the inadequacies and criminal propensity of Brazil's working poor. The fact that three of the four portraits were of persons of African origin or descent is no coincidence. It illustrates Jean's argument that Brazil's postcolonial penal system evolved alongside the young nation's struggles with Atlantic abolitionist pressures, citizenship for its racially diverse population, and the labor needs of its plantation economy and modernization project.

The book's five chapters offer a rich—if at times long and insufficiently edited—discussion of post-independence citizenship, modernization, abolitionism, and policing and incarceration practices in nineteenth-century Brazil. Jean walks us through the historical developments that tied Afro-Brazilians' right to citizenship to demonstrable industriousness and occupational skills in chapter 1. In chapter 2, she explains Brazil's embrace of punitive labor regimes as a tool of social control at a time when efforts to abolish the slave trade produced a population of illegally trafficked Africans liberated by the courts. Chapter 3 examines the insurmountable obstacles imposed on the full freedom of liberated Africans and their subjection to forced apprenticeships and service to both public and private enterprises. The exploitation of their unfree labor in support of infrastructure projects and urban jobs enabled, she argues, the geographical