

***The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas.*
By Monica Muñoz Martinez. (Harvard University Press, 2018).**

In the early twentieth century, Texas police, military, and vigilante groups participated in a concerted effort to harm and intimidate the Mexican population of Texas through acts of violence, including lynchings, burnings, shootings, and more. In her book, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, historian Monica Muñoz Martinez examines these acts of violence to circumvent active attempts to cover up documentation by state officials. Martinez highlights not just a long history of violence absent from the record, but also the ways that violence affected the individual and familial generations. Martinez argues that violence committed by the state of Texas worked to establish and enforce the relatively new border with Mexico by instilling fear in Mexican communities. Further, Martinez argues that because this time period is falsely remembered as a time of progress, collective memories and popular history should be reevaluated to address the true circumstances of anti-Mexican violence in Texas.¹

Organizing the book into two parts, Martinez discusses examples of violence on individuals and groups targeted by state terrorism in chapters one through three, while focusing on the role state officials, (such as rangers and state representatives), played in that violence in chapters four through six. Chapter one details lynchings committed by Texas Rangers, examining both Mexican and American reactions to them in the media in order to argue that the memory of these lynchings still colors racial tensions in Texas today.² Chapter two describes how the events of Ranger violence against Mexicans led to both police and military forces increasing in number at the border, which Martinez argues led to a similar increase in the

¹ Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, (Harvard University Press, 2018), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 75.

number of incompetent and untrained officers.³ In Chapter three, Martinez discusses the aftermath of a massacre committed by a vigilante group that escaped justice, arguing that, for the victims' families and community, actively remembering the unprosecuted killers became an act of generational resistance.⁴

Chapter four details the weak response to the state violence crisis in Texas, despite several investigations proving the extreme levels of attacks and corruption targeting Mexicans in the early twentieth century.⁵ The lack of state acknowledgement of its failing police practices, Martinez argues, was an indication of the deep racism found in Texas government at the time.⁶ In Chapter five, Martinez argues that photographic documentation of lynchings starting in the twentieth century, such as the distribution of photos and postcards depicting violence against Mexicans, (a lucrative business in the twentieth century), operated as a major terror tactic for Texas officials.⁷ The sixth and final chapter in Martinez's book examines the false history celebrated in Texas today, where proclaiming Texas Rangers as heroes and patriots completely ignores the long history of racism and violence in the state.⁸

In proving her thesis, Martinez cites specific examples of anti-Mexican violence and details the response by both whites and Mexicans in Texas. While Martinez employs some extant archival sources from the early twentieth century, she strategically navigates the lack of a full documentary record through oral histories—giving voice to the living memories of Texas Ranger terrorism. Not only does her work deftly prove the persistence of state-sanctioned racial terrorism, but beyond that, it employs storytelling in such a way that readers viscerally *feel* the

³ Martinez, 88.

⁴ Ibid., 170.

⁵ Ibid., 223.

⁶ Ibid., 226.

⁷ Ibid., 232.

⁸ Ibid., 274.

pain of the individuals and families who experienced the everyday violence of living in Texas while Mexican. In the end, Martinez relates her research in an easy to follow and incredibly engaging way, making her vital story an interest to both an academic audience and anyone interested in a deeper understanding of Mexican-American history.

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⁹ As an editor, the author recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.