
Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America, Edited by Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4773-2067-9. 288 pages, \$42.75 (Kindle e-book) \$45.00 (hardback).

Howard Campbell , PhD
University of Texas-El Paso

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss>
pp. 130-132

Recommended Citation

Campbell, Howard , PhD. "Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America, Edited by Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4773-2067-9. 288 pages, \$42.75 (Kindle e-book) \$45.00 (hardback).."
Journal of Strategic Security 14, no. 2 (2021) : 130-132.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.14.2.1959>

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/8>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Strategic Security by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America, Edited by Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4773-2067-9. 288 pages, \$42.75 (Kindle e-book) \$45.00 (hardback).

***Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America*, Edited by Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4773-2067-9. 288 pages, \$42.75 (Kindle e-book) \$45.00 (hardback).**

Review by Howard Campbell, University of Texas-El Paso

The U.S.-Mexico border is a location of great importance in modern American and Mexican politics. Everyday, national newscasters and politicians fret and storm about rampant unchecked immigration, violent criminal gangs, massive narcotics trafficking and the breakdown of law and order on the border. The Canadian-U.S. border, though less central to partisan political debates in the U.S., is nonetheless a site of substantial significance to both nations. The volume under review is important, if for no other reason than our need to know more about how these borders became the complex, contentious zones they are today.

In their introduction, Karibo and Díaz provide many important lessons about the history of policing and resistance in the borderlands. Both borders have become increasingly militarized as part of the expansion of the U.S. security state, and to a much lesser degree by the Mexican and Canadian governments hardening enforcement. Various challenges to the extant security apparatuses on the border, as well as local events viewed as crises and threats to the nation and state propelled the growth of repressive regimes of border authority. At the same time, local populations and smaller groups constantly maneuvered to evade and escape arbitrary state power and pursue their individual and collective self-interest. Karibo and Díaz's review of the existing literature on border policing and resistance is solid and insightful.

The empirical richness of the case studies is impressive. Part I concerns how military conflicts and ethno-colonial wars produced the current international borderlines. Various chapters consider the ways emerging international boundaries created divided loyalties for local people and fine lines between illicit and licit commerce. Martin studies the manner in which this played out among privateers in the new northeastern border of Canada and the U.S. in the early 19th century. García looks at how mid-19th

century regional leaders from both northeastern Mexico and South Texas shaped the developing law enforcement structure on the U.S.-Mexico border, while defending transnational local interests and traditions that frustrated the authority of the two national governments. Hoy discusses how federally established borders attacked the indigenous cross-border communities, connections and fluid transnational practices of First Nations people such as the Cree, the Mohawk and the Sinixt.

Part II expands on this theme as the North American states consolidated their power and attempted to assert their authority at the border and control free immigration. Hence we see the emergence of law enforcement agencies, such as the U.S. Border Patrol studied by Dupree (chapter 6), and the consular offices described by Duarte (chapter 4), and even the racist paramilitary vigilantes chronicled by Levario in chapter 7.

In Parts III and IV there are fascinating chapters by Barnett, Branscombe, Clancy and Chartrand, Guerra, and others concerning how indigenous groups and individuals straddling international boundary lines, despite government crackdowns, crossed back and forth with peyote, tobacco, liquor, narcotics and other goods traded and consumed for religious, economic, practical and subsistence purposes. Predictably, tightening and further repression were the state response, both in the past and especially more recently in the aftermath of 9/11 and concerns about a terrorist threat at each border. Several chapters, particularly chapter 9 by Monsiváis, examine how border policing focused not only on banning and confiscating certain illicit goods but also impacted social roles, including socially acceptable behavior by Mexican women. Border vice codes attempted to regulate the control of contraband alcohol (especially tequila and mescal) but also enforce proper gender behavior by “ethnic” women who were supposed to uphold mainstream moral values in the home and not become transgressive “public nuisances” in society. The fascinating discussions of women’s smuggling techniques and careers echoes Díaz’s fine earlier book *Border Contraband*.

Karibo and Díaz compare the Canada-U.S. and Mexico-U.S. borders through a “connective approach.” They endeavor to view events occurring on both borders, as part of the same, parallel, or similar processes rather than as *sui generis* phenomena. Contrary to the idea that the Canadian and Mexico borders with the U.S. are radically different, the authors suggest we see them as quite comparable and create a dialogue about their similarities and differences. This approach is laudable and instructive but

also at times weakens the impact of the volume as the reader toggles back and forth between North and South.

In fairness to the editors, a comprehensive history of these two vital, complex border zones would require dozens more volumes. Not surprisingly, the Mexican-American border receives more attention in the volume. It is also not unexpected that the U.S.-Canadian border though also militarized and racialized is somewhat less violent and conflictive. Perhaps the editors could have expanded their discussion of the lessons learned from comparing two quite distinct borders.

The Afterword by Jacoby invokes the standard, by now overworked, notion of the border as a “state of exception.” Moreover, his invocation of Américo Paredes and the Ballad of Gregorio Cortez as a rallying cry for understanding subaltern resistance on the Mexican border seems like a predictable, almost pro forma, gesture. The afterword, however, does raise the critical question about how “deep” is the border. Does it stretch 100 miles inward from the international boundary as the U.S. Department of Justice determined in 1953 or are older notions of clearly defined, hard borders separated from interior regions less relevant in a world of globalized transnational technologies, coercive state apparatuses and migration (as suggested in the preface by Carey and Marak)? Overall, the volume is a great resource for scholars and students of borders and security issues alike.