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*Ciudad Juárez: Saga of a Legendary Border City* by Oscar J.  
Martínez (review)

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ties or their content relates more intuitively to other parts of the anthology. The essays in Part Five, "Reconsiderations," which the editors organized around the theme of transdisciplinary methodology, offer several examples. Chapter thirteen explores the development of the black community in Albuquerque, New Mexico; in almost every respect it has more in common with chapter one's examination of black Houston than it does with its companion pieces on transdisciplinary scholarship. Likewise, chapter fourteen, on the ways that representations of the West in mass culture have excluded African Americans, seems better suited for the preceding unit entitled "Entertainment and Representation." Part Five concludes with an interview transcript drawn from the same methodology as the oral history from Part One.

Despite these limitations, this anthology contains a wealth of helpful historical and bibliographical information on the often-underrepresented experiences of African Americans in the urban communities of the West. Ruffin and Mack deserve credit for taking on the important and difficult task of assembling this material for the benefit of the next generation of scholars.

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*Ciudad Juárez: Saga of a Legendary Border City.* By Oscar J. Martínez. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018. Pp. xi, 335. \$90.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper; \$29.95 ebook)

Oscar J. Martínez could have not chosen a better time to update and revise his seminal work *Border Boom Town* (1978). As Mexican border cities are vilified, discussions of building a wall along the almost two-thousand mile stretch of the U.S.–México boundary are taking place, and the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is uncertain, it is necessary to understand the history of Ciudad Juárez and the complex realities of *la frontera*. Like its predecessor, *Ciudad Juárez: Saga of a Legendary Border City*, offers a historical overview from 1848 to the present, focusing on the economic and social developments

of the city and the intertwined relationship between Juárez and its sister city El Paso, Texas.

Since the inception of Ciudad Juárez, the city and the border region have played an important role within a transnational and global economy due to its distance from interior Mexico and location at the nexus of two countries. Focusing on events such as the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s, the Mexican Revolution, Prohibition, the Great Depression, and World War II and its aftermath, Martínez sheds light on how Ciudad Juárez became an extension of the U.S. economy. During this period, the city experimented with free trade zones, provided a labor pool for El Paso, created a tourist industry that catered to Americans, and, finally, provided affordable consumer goods—both legal and illegal—to its sister city. Martínez argues that “the increased interdependence, however, made Juárez more vulnerable to external conditions, generating ever more frequent and intense cycles of boom and bust” (p. 9).

Martínez is upfront about the nature of the book, as the first seven chapters are largely the same as *Border Boom Town*. There are, however, several changes to the work. Martínez made editorial revisions, removed information deemed unnecessary, and eliminated statistical tables that deterred non-academic readers. More importantly, the author incorporated new scholarship into his book. His inclusion of the rising body of literature on vice and smuggling on the border is a welcome addition, as the historic nature of illicit activities along *la frontera* gave rise to Ciudad Juárez’s infamous image of being the “world’s deadliest city.”

In the new section of the volume, Martínez pushes the chronology from the late 1970s to the present. In these four decades, Ciudad Juárez underwent dramatic changes due in part to the expansion of the maquiladora system and the establishment of NAFTA. With the growth of the maquila sector, Ciudad Juárez experienced an unprecedented boom that brought a new set of problems including urban sprawl, lack of proper infrastructure, and environmental problems. While the city experienced socioeconomic growth, Martínez argues that the lack of diversity in Juárez’s economy solidified U.S. domination of the city’s and Mexico’s economy. As a result, Ciudad Juárez became very vulnerable, facing a rollercoaster of economic hardships during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This economic downfall and the rise of drug trafficking in Mexico created the perfect storm for the eruption of violence in the city, furthering the financial crisis. Martínez concludes with the rise of resistance from *juarenses* as a number of organizations, citizens, and activists have mobilized and reclaimed the city. Martínez’s inclusion of three new chapters on Ciudad Juárez’s history are crucial for understanding the boom and bust that the city faced in the latter

half of the twentieth century, and why Juárez and the border region became important geographic spaces in the Drug War.

While the new chapters are an important contribution to our understanding of this city, Martínez presents Ciudad Juárez and other border cities in isolation from the politics and economy of the rest of Mexico and, at times, the United States. The author makes an inherent assumption that readers are familiar with these themes. While the purpose of the book is to give an overview, this context can help readers understand the unique socioeconomic and political circumstances the border and Juárez have historically navigated. For example, the author argues in the last decades of the twentieth century, Juárez played an important role leading the rest of the country in the maquiladora-centered neoliberal economic shift. Without knowledge of the rest of Mexico's economic system, the effects of this drastic change are not truly captured in the volume.

Bridging the chronology to present day is a welcome addition to the scholarship of the border, and particularly of Juárez. As scholars, journalists, and other writers—and rightfully so—are chronicling the stories of violence, humanitarian crises, and the drug war, it is important to connect these to the narrative Martínez presents. Without this historical context, the contemporary issues faced by Ciudad Juárez, and other border cities, would not be understood. Despite its lack of contextualization within the larger workings of Mexico's economy and politics, Martínez has revised an important book that dissects the city's present environment in an accessible manner. *Ciudad Juárez: Saga of a Legendary Border City* is highly recommended to scholars and audiences interested in the complex dynamics of the U.S.–México border.

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