

comparative perspective works as she hoped, to illuminate many aspects of the particular while allowing the reader to see the broader picture and to appreciate the extent to which creoles across the region shared and promoted a common culture. This is a book that will stimulate new questions and debates among all historians of nineteenth century Spanish America.

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*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 41 (2009). doi:10.1017/S0022216X09005616

Jesús F. de la Teja and Ross Frank (eds.), *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion: Social Control on Spain's North American Frontiers* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), pp. xxi + 338, \$24.95, pb.

This fine collection both bridges the scholarly divide separating work on the Eastern and Western Spanish borderlands and redresses the tendency to leave out the work of Mexican scholars altogether. These essays, initially presented at a conference sponsored by Southern Methodist University's Clements Center for Southwestern Studies and refined at a subsequent gathering, reveal scholars engaging the question of how social control was established and maintained in frontier societies. The strategies devised, to exert control and to counter it, are the subject of these essays. Spaniards faced steep challenges to their attempts to establish order in these regions: hostile Indian groups, European powers threatening inroads into Spanish territory, emergent local societies flexing their political muscles. The essays, examinations ranging from the imperial level through the community level to the individual, reveal the northern frontier as a 'vibrant complex world of negotiated social roles and diverse cultural identities' (p. xx).

After a brief introductory essay by Jesús de la Teja, Alfredo Jiménez's essay 'Who Controls the King?' argues that social control was exerted not simply 'top down' from the Crown in ways entirely standard, but also 'bottom up', with the will of the Crown's subjects softening the Crown's position vis-à-vis those subjects. Anyone could write to the king, Jiménez argues (p. 21), and, in those letters expressing a concern or arguing a position, subjects invariably expressed concern for the monarch's eternal salvation. Was this enough to 'control the king'? It's an interesting conception of 'control', to be sure, illustrative, Jiménez argues, of a willingness to challenge and reshape within the strictly confined space of 'royal subject'.

Ross Frank and Patricia Osante each explores how emissaries of the Bourbon Crown – Governor don Fernando de la Concha, in the case of Frank's study, and José de Escandón, in Osante's – attempted to impose order on the regions under their control. Frank takes as his lens Concha's 1794 report to his successor to explore the development of *vecino* society in Bourbon New Mexico. Concha wrote in unsettled times, with New Mexico's racial hierarchy in flux but no clearly identified economic elite from which to draw local leaders. In that transitional moment Concha glossed *vecino* behaviour in terms more often applied to the 'barbarous nations', contrasting *vecinos'* maliciousness and wilfulness with the exemplary pueblo that Spanish authorities far more successfully controlled (p. 86). The task for Concha and his successors was to extend the system of control over both indigenous and *vecino* 'barbarous elements'. The presence by 1820 of an energised and dynamic *vecino* sector, 'architects of the new social order' (p. 91), suggests that Spanish colonial administrators fell short of their goal.

Osante's examination of Nuevo Santander's late eighteenth-century colonisation highlights the mix of Crown and private efforts to settle that region. Concerned about foreign encroachment, the Crown entrusted the task of colonising the region to the *empresario* Escandón who recruited investors looking to establish livestock ranching in the region. Hoping to tap the labour of mission Indians and newly recruited colonists, Escandón met resistance from Franciscan missionaries and rising dissatisfaction among the settler families who found promises of land unmet. In a colony governed by the military, settler families lacked recourse to local institutions, such as that enjoyed by Sonora's *común*, that might serve as loci of resistance; Franciscans lost primary authority over their charges as well. Even with Escandón's fall, structures of authority that vested power in the hands of the large landholders remained intact.

Concerns with external threats loomed larger in certain areas than in others, as essays by Jane Landers, Gilbert C. Din and Juliana Barr make clear. Florida, Louisiana, and Texas were critical borderlands, interfacing with lands controlled by other European powers coveting what Spain so tenuously held. Florida, a magnet for slaves fleeing the southernmost British colonies, was particularly problematic. Blacks, Spaniards and Indians in mixed militia units defended the border and created a situation where at critical moments, Landers argues, 'the racial and social hierarchies Spain might have wished for gave way to the imperatives of territorial defense' (p. 34). Especially in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Florida, 'social control' seemed to come largely from the 'perpetual state of siege' (p. 42) induced by political instability in the Caribbean and the mainland colonies and the emergence of an ambitious and expansionist new nation on its northern border, which 'may have actually served to mediate conduct and unite the many disparate elements of society against a common foe' (p. 42). In Louisiana, which Spain possessed for only 40 years, Gilbert Din finds a region whose experience differs from that of the other Spanish borderlands. Lacking missions, *presidios*, and efforts to convert the indigenous populations, Spain 'fervently sought cooperation, not opposition, from [Louisianans], and strove to avoid antagonising any faction' (p. 67). In the case of Texas, Juliana Barr asserts, Spaniards were forced to operate on Indian terms. Spaniards failed to grasp the world in which they were operating. Accustomed to the role of conquerors (although with little to show for that save for the outposts of San Antonio, Los Adaes and Nacogdoches), Spaniards rarely intermarried (a strategy that had ensured good relations between Caddoans and French, for example), misinterpreted male diplomatic rituals (envisioning themselves as 'fathers' rather than 'brothers'), and misread captive exchange as hostage-taking rather than as a tool to forge alliances. Attempting to establish social control, they failed to understand 'native social controls guiding the political and economic relations of Indian nations' (p. 168). The story of Spaniards in Texas is one of missed opportunities, misread signals, and profound misunderstanding of the context in which they operated.

Susan Deeds and James Sandos explore social control at the level of the individual. Deeds considers two 'deviant women' in seventeenth-century Nueva Vizcaya – one a *mulata* slave who fled her master and masqueraded as a man, the other a practitioner of 'love magic' who wove her spell around an unfortunate Jesuit priest – to understand the contested nature of social control on the northwestern frontier. Deeds is most concerned with Spanish efforts to enforce 'conformity to idealized gender and ethnic roles and relationships' (p. 96) in culturally and ethnically mixed regions where

the coercive mechanisms of the state were limited. These ‘transgressive women’ had greater leeway in a society in flux to assert control over their lives. This would change, Deeds suggests, by the eighteenth century, ‘as the non-Indian population grew and patriarchal repression supplanted the more gratuitous forms of violence that characterised a fractious frontier’ (pp. 113–4). James Sandos is also concerned with gender, but brings a concern with ethnicity as well in his examination of Alta California. Sandos explores the ‘limits of social control’ on that particular frontier, finding control ‘negotiated, not imposed’ (p. 271). In the cases of two other women – the Spanish wife of the governor, and a gentile ringleader of a planned mission uprising – Sandos finds subordinates making strategic choices to destabilise the patriarchal power dynamic, in Doña Eulalia’s case, ‘going to extremes’ to gain her goal of escaping California (p. 260), in Toyipurina’s case, ‘going along to get along’ to ‘avoid further interference’ by the authorities in her life (p. 263). Control is contested in the mission regime as well; Franciscans only desultorily undertook the preparation of their charges for pueblo life, despite the governor’s orders, and Indians resisted the missionising efforts ‘in multiple forms’ (p. 269).

Questions about the negotiation of colonial identities occupy both Cecilia Sheridan and José Cuello. Sheridan explores the ‘social reorganization of territory’ (p. 143), as non-sedentary populations devised subsistence strategies in response to the Spanish penetration of the northeast from the mid-sixteenth century forward. Mobility, shifting ethnic alliances, reconfiguration of ethnic groups, and expansive conceptions of territoriality (‘independent of the control of specific territory’, p. 127), are evidence of ethnogenesis, a cultural rebirth that allowed northern populations to resist Spanish domination for the better part of two centuries. Cuello examines racialised hierarchies of control in Saltillo, countering assumptions that the *sistema de castas* disintegrated in frontier regions. Cuello argues that the fluidity and flexibility of the system allowed it to function as an organising principle across a varied spatial and temporal landscape (p. 205), and finds that it continued to be salient to the end of the colonial era. Racial identity determined ‘differential access to the resources that defined social roles’. Cuello concludes stating that ‘patterns in property ownership, occupation, racial endogamy and exogamy, social status assignments, and political office reveal a well-defined hierarchy of privilege and preference among four major racialized groups’ (p. 220).

Cynthia Radding examines how populations regrouped in the wake of Spanish intrusion. However, unlike the situation Sheridan deals with, in Sonora the reconstitution of communities often occurred under the auspices of the mission. Such nucleation clearly served Crown interests, facilitating supervision and Christianisation. But communities thus reconstituted benefited as well, most notably through their use of the *cabildo*, or municipal council, to defend agrarian resources. ‘Spanish and indigenous objectives met in the *cabildo*’, Radding argues (p. 182); missionaries, having chosen *cabildo* officers, viewed this as a ‘vehicle for social control’, but *cabildo* officers were ‘empowered by the missionaries’ dependence on them’ (p. 186), and their role in distributing local resources made them figures of authority in the eyes of the común.

De la Teja and Frank’s collection rejoins regions too often studied as ‘sub-histories’ of more recent national entities. Through the thematic lens of ‘negotiations of power’, these richly textured essays offer a refreshing perspective on the development of the northern edges of Spain’s American empire.