In the Vortex of Violence
Lynching, Extralegal Justice, and the State in Post-Revolutionary Mexico
GEMA KLOPPE-SANTAMARÍA

“Conceptually cogent, profoundly researched, and persuasively written, In the Vortex of Violence appraises the political, cultural, and moral motivations behind lynching for community stakeholders, draws readers near the pain of brutal violence, and unearths its meanings for wider processes of state-making, exclusion, and domination in twentieth-century Mexico. An admirable achievement!”—Wil G. Pansters, Professor of Social and Political Anthropology of Latin America, University College Utrecht

“In the Vortex of Violence is an engaging and highly original foray into lynchings—a particular feature of violence that undergirds the relationship between civil society and state structures in Mexico. Gema Kloppe-Santamaria argues that we must center lynchings in our analysis of state formation to grasp the scale of impunity rampant in Mexico today. She expertly shows that the violence in contemporary Mexico has deep historical roots. The work is at once highly accessible and deeply sophisticated.”—Gladys McCormick, Associate Professor in History and the Jay and Debe Moskowitz Chair in Mexico-US Relations, Syracuse University

In the Vortex of Violence examines the uncharted history of lynching in post-revolutionary Mexico. Based on a collection of previously untapped sources, the book examines why lynching became a persistent practice during a period otherwise characterized by political stability and decreasing levels of violence. It explores how state formation processes, as well as religion, perceptions of crime, and mythical beliefs, contributed to shaping people’s understanding of lynching as a legitimate form of justice. Extending the history of lynching beyond the United States, this book offers key insights into the cultural, historical, and political reasons behind the violent phenomenon and its continued practice in Latin America today.

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