

"For decades, countries across Latin America have followed the US's lead in trying to incarcerate away problems of crime, violence, drugs, social exclusion, and inequality. Even more than in the US, the carceral turn has not just failed to solve these problems – it has almost certainly made them worse. This carefully researched book breaks new ground, drawing on extensive surveys of inmates throughout Latin America that both give voice to the prisoners themselves and provide a powerful empirical basis for systematic thinking about the failure of mass incarceration across Latin America. Indeed, Bergman and Fondevila's work has insights not just for Latin America but across what we might rightly call the 'carceral hemisphere,' and should provide a sorely lacking bridge between the study of crime and prisons in the United States and research on crime and violence in Latin America."

Benjamin Lessing, The University of Chicago

"The prison crisis is a problem present throughout Latin America. Often made invisible by policies that emphasize punishment and a citizenry that seeks protection from crime; in most countries prisons are places of violence. In this excellent work, Bergman and Fondevila describe the multiple dimensions of the crisis and confirm that waves of incarceration have been key factors in increasing crime and violence. An urgent and necessary book, based on unique and comparative evidence, which allows us to further discuss a key issue to reduce violence and crime in the region."

Lucía Dammert, University of Santiago, Chile