



# **Surprise Heirs II: Illegitimacy, Inheritance Rights, and Public Power in the Formation of Imperial Brazil, 1822-1889**

*Linda Lewin*

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Focusing on the inheritance rights of people born outside wedlock, this book explores the legal evolution of their rights as Brazil moved from colony to nation. It offers a unique counterpoint to the conventional political history of the Brazilian Empire, which ignores important legal change involving family and inheritance law. The book also provides a new and complementary approach to recent scholarship on the family in nineteenth-century Brazil by using that research as a starting point for examining illegitimacy, marriage, and concubinage from the neglected perspective of legal change.

The author's exhaustive study of parliamentary debates reveals how the private sphere of the family acquired fundamental significance in the public discourse of Brazil's imperial legislators. The concluding theme of the book treats the reactionary shift away from liberal reform, the result of the "scandal in the courtroom" that the reform generated.

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