

the basic problem was climatic, rather than recognizing that the socio-economic structure of the rural sector leaves large groups of farmers (primarily sharecroppers and small landholders) extremely vulnerable to slight changes in the rainfall cycle. Census data and information from previous studies are offered in support of the argument.

Irrigation of major river valleys as a solution to the problems of drought is treated in chapters 3 through 6. After discussing the origins and scope of the multimillion dollar irrigation program of the 1960s and 1970s, Hall evaluates its impacts in terms of the three program objectives: (1) to stabilize the rural population, (2) to increase family incomes, and (3) to increase agricultural output. Criteria and data for evaluation were derived from previous studies, official documents, and detailed fieldwork in three project sites. The evidence clearly demonstrates that by 1976 the projects were not attaining the basic objectives or the specific targets called for in the implementation plans. Hall argues that even when completed the projects will not significantly relieve the problems of drought because they, like the earlier program of reservoir construction, do not reach those rural residents most affected by variations in rainfall.

Hall concludes with some interesting comparisons to irrigation schemes in other parts of the world. Several alternatives to Brazil's current irrigation strategy also are examined (collective cultivation, new technology, land redistribution, marketing reform, and resettlement). The reviewer is nevertheless left with the impression that there is very little hope of significant change in the socioeconomic structure of production and marketing, and that human suffering will continue to be associated with drought in Northeast Brazil. Although negative in its conclusions, this book should be required reading for Brazilian planners and should eventually serve as an important document in the continuing drama of Northeast Brazil.

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*Venezuelan Economic Development: A Politico-Economic Analysis.*

By LORING ALLEN. Greenwich, Conn., 1977. JAI Press. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xviii, 310. Cloth. \$23.50.

Only a handful of North American social scientists know Venezuela well, well enough to convey in their writing a feel for the inner character of that rapidly changing, boisterously democratic country. Loring

Allen is clearly one of these, and his book fills the need for a broad but detailed survey of the Venezuelan political economy. *Venezuelan Economic Development* does not pretend to analytical originality, and readers seeking theoretical insights will be disappointed. But those seeking information about key Venezuelan institutions now have a general reference for a description of everything from trade policy to the capital markets law.

Allen's overall approach is consistent with most North American scholarship on Venezuela: it is strongly optimistic about Venezuela's chance of becoming one of the "first developing countries to attain developed-country status, only a few years from now." Some of Allen's data does raise doubts about the justification for this enthusiasm, especially his account of the persistent failure of the country to revitalize agriculture and, more generally, to reduce its dependence on oil income, but he does make a convincing case that the near-term prospects, at least, are very bright indeed.

Although generally quite well-written, the book, unfortunately, is poorly organized, and because of this very repetitious. In addition, it occasionally lapses into tedious presentations of data which might better be summarized in tables or graphs. Too, the index is both skimpy and badly done, a serious flaw for a book that is likely to serve as a broad reference for people unfamiliar with Venezuela. Overall, however, Loring Allen has filled an important gap with his introductory survey of modern Venezuelan economic and governmental institutions. And, most important of all, his depiction of how things happen in that country is a great deal more sensitive to the inner workings and vitality of the society than is the case with most studies of this kind.

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*Argentina in the Postwar Era: Politics and Economic Policy Making in a Divided Society.* By GARY W. WYNIA. Albuquerque, 1978. University of New Mexico Press. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 289. Cloth. \$15.00.

This volume represents a praiseworthy attempt to unravel the enigma of Argentina's arrested development. Utilizing the methods of comparative analysis, Professor Wynia, a political scientist at the University of Minnesota, examines the formulation and implementation of public policy under different kinds of regimes. To provide broad