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political character that water acquired in post-revolutionary Mexico, and the process of centralisation of water control in the hands of the federal state.

These three works illustrate different ways of approaching the multifaceted problem facing the social management of water in Latin America. They will provide useful material for students and scholars working in the fields of geography, regional and urban studies, water history and related topics.

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Don M. Coerver and Linda B. Hall, *Tangled Destinies: Latin America and the United States* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), pp. xii + 289, \$39.95, \$19.95 pb.

This is essentially a history of relations between the United States and Latin America for undergraduate course adoption. The authors teach Latin American history at Texas Christian University and the University of New Mexico, respectively. The first two chapters of their book deal respectively with the period before 1848 and 1848–98; the remaining seven chapters with the period down to 1999. The last two are topically organised, on the Latino diaspora in the USA and the drug problem. An original feature is that each chapter begins with a ‘vignette’ dealing with a single episode in some way typical of the period under study. Again, ‘Point Counter-point’ gives a number of telling quotations in each chapter. Together these devices undoubtedly enhance the book’s interest to students, though the choice of the Water Witch incident as illustrative of the period 1848–98 could be questioned. There is a succinct chronology as well as 23 illustrations and five maps.

Given this structure, about half of the book deals with very recent (‘contemporary’) history, that of the past thirty years or so. The authors have obviously tried hard to present a balanced view and on the whole have been successful, but there is no getting away from the fact that this is a view from the USA heavily reliant on US sources. Presumably not to frighten the reader surprisingly few sources are actually cited, which seems a pity, especially since the bibliographical note is quite selective, the Falklands Crisis being represented only by the account of the war by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, which may or may not justify the curious comment that its outcome was ‘predictable’ (p. 172). It is also a very conventional political history in that it shows few influences from the social sciences – even the discussion of the debt crisis of the 1980s is couched in very general terms and lacks hard data. But with these reservations it is, an interesting introduction to Latin America seen as a problem for US policymakers.

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Julia Buxton and Nicola Phillips (eds.), *Developments in Latin American Political Economy: States, Markets and Actors* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. xiv + 241, £45.00, £14.99 pb.

Edited books on the political economy of contemporary Latin America seem to be popular with publishers and academics alike at the turn of the century. This

volume edited by two political scientists, Julia Buxton and Nicola Phillips, is twinned with another edited book about Latin American political economy that both authors have edited. The other book adopts a country-by-country approach. The present book attempts a more continental perspective.

One reason, perhaps, why publishers like books on political economy is that the concept can cover a wide range of disciplines – politics, cultural studies, economics, sociology, geography and environmental studies, urban studies and so on. In the context of disciplinary range, this edited book is quite limited, with virtually all contributors in the area of political science and international studies. Hence the focus on the economic, social and cultural impacts of the contemporary political economy of Latin America is quite restricted. Indeed the bulk of the book (six out of ten chapters) focuses on political actors. As a group, they are introduced as both traditional and emerging, although no formal definition or classification is developed.

Craig Arceneaux attempts a wide Latin American vision in order to identify the ways in which the role of the military is being redefined. He concludes that 'civil-military relations have reached a critical juncture' as 'civilian control and democracy have emerged as the new norm' (pp. 107). Guerrilla movements are presented as another traditional actor of Latin American politics, and Peter Calvert focuses on their contemporary relevance. However, he follows a country-by-country approach rather than attempting to provide a continent-wide vision of their changing role. Laura Tedesco reverts to the continental brief and examines the emergence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the context of the redefinition of the state and the changes in political economy. She concludes with an interesting family metaphor, in that 'the NGOs are out there filling the gap left by the retreat of the state, as an older brother tidies up his little brother's bedroom in order to avoid their mother's anger' (p. 143).

A wide-ranging review of human rights movements in Latin America is provided by Alexandra Barahona de Brito. She examines the evolution of the human rights movement, its changing relations with the state and the internationalisation of the movement before focusing on ways in which the human rights agenda has expanded in recent years to cover non-traditional areas such as the rights of women, indigenous peoples, gays and lesbians. She concludes convincingly that 'Latin America's political and state authorities or institutions cannot do without the pressures for change and incorporation emanating from the movement as a whole, however uncomfortable the demands posed may be' (p. 164). Fiona Macaulay's chapter develops further the issue of women's groups in the region and Jonathan Barton looks at the development of the environmental agenda in the region.

These reviews provide chapters of varying quality about traditional and emerging actors in the region. It should be pointed out that there is no review of the changing role of the state or the emergence of technocracies in Latin American countries. One significant problem with this edited book is that these chapters on traditional and emerging actors are not placed in any coherent wider context. There is no introductory chapter that reviews shifts in political economy in Latin America over recent time and introduces the different theoretical approaches that have justified such changes in political economy.

Instead there are four introductory chapters by four different authors with four very different approaches. First, Duncan Green tries to cram a lot of his observations on the experience of neoliberalism in Latin America into one

chapter. George Philip reviews contemporary political institutions and democratic consolidation in a rather short chapter. Daniel Hellinger reviews political parties – a chapter that may have been better included with the chapters in the second part on political actors. Finally, Nicola Phillips reviews regional integration in Latin America – a theme already referred to by Duncan Green.

Edited books on contemporary political economy in Latin America may appear popular with publishers, but they need to be committed to integrating a wide range of themes and disciplines. Furthermore, a careful overview of the theories and history of political economy in Latin America, though difficult, should be attempted by the editors (or authors) so that the non-specialist is able to read an attempt at integrating the many disparate themes by writers interested in the subject. It is useful to focus on new issues and new players, but it is also valuable to put them into a wider historical context.

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Luigi Manzetti, *Privatization South American Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. xii + 373, £45.00 hb.

It is not uncommon to find an author introducing a book by arguing that the theme, although neglected, is of great importance. In this case, though, it is undeniably true. The study of privatisation has not been exactly neglected but there are few comparative studies and even fewer that concentrate on the politics of the process rather than on the economics. Luigi Manzetti admirably fills this gap by studying the politics of privatisation in three South American countries, Argentina, Brazil and Peru. These three were chosen rather than say the pioneer of the process, Chile, or one of the other earlier privatising countries, Mexico, because they were all formal democracies and hence more comparable in terms of the political process of privatisation.

The book starts with an overall account of the political economy of privatisation, and of the Latin American countries in the 1980s when, by and large, privatisation failed to take off. The heart of the book lies in the three chapters on Argentina, Brazil and Peru in the 1990s, and the author brings out very clearly not only the differences between the three countries but also the differences within those countries over time. The argument is presented with a mass of detailed evidence and careful analysis in each case of the major privatisations undertaken. It is admirably presented and represents a model of careful political analysis. Each case study ends with a judicious assessment of the costs and benefits of the way that privatisation was undertaken in the country concerned.

The author offers a clear model of the optimal way of privatising. Companies to be privatised should be restructured first to maximise their attractiveness to potential purchasers and to avoid handing over monopolies intact and thereby creating private monopolies to replace public ones. The process of selling off the state asset should be as transparent and competitive as possible to avoid covert deals with political supporters. Perhaps most important of all is that a powerful regulatory agency must be in place before the process is completed otherwise the