

The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest. By NILES HANSEN. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Tables. Map. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 225. Cloth. \$17.95. Paper. \$8.95.

The United States–Mexico border is clearly the area of major convergence, cooperation, and conflict between the two countries. Yet as important as this zone has been, it has, for the most part, been much neglected by scholars from both countries. It is only recently, primarily because of Mexican factors, that researchers have begun to publish important works dealing with various themes of the frontier between the United States and Mexico.

One representative study of this trend is Niles Hansen's *The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest*. In his study, Hansen attempts to define the nature of the economic relationship between the border communities. The author begins his analysis with an assessment of border development policies and of three general economic theories concerning border regions. He takes strong issue with the negative characterization of border economies found within these theories, namely, the international trade theory, the location theory, and the growth pole theory. Hansen postulates mutually advantageous conditions of the United States–Mexico border as his central thesis. According to this thesis, both sides of the border function in a symbiotic relationship. One important example is the role of the twin plants (*maquiladoras*) as sources of employment for both countries. Other examples that Hansen points to are the contributions of Mexican labor and the Mexican American community in the economic development of the United States Southwest.

The Border Economy is basically a synthesis of current economic data and secondary economic literature on the border. The emphasis is on the United States side, with only passing references to the Mexican economy. The main contributions come from the initial chapters' studies of economic border theories and issues. The treatment of Mexican and Mexican American labor is repetitive of other research. This study should be viewed as an outline of major themes and concepts that will, one hopes, be examined by other scholars in a more critical and original manner.

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El Salvador: Background to the Crisis. By FRANK AFFLITTO et al. Cambridge, Mass.: Central America Information Office, 1982. Tables. Chronology. Maps. Bibliography. Pp. 148. Paper.

Although the authors state in the first sentence of this slim book that their aim is "to provide an accurate and critical introduction to the current situation in El Salvador . . .," it is clear throughout the volume that the authors are really more interested in rallying opposition to United States policy in Central America. As they state in the second sentence of the book, "the U.S. government can only conduct [*sic*] an immoral foreign policy by keeping people in the dark." Unfortunately, the book is neither accurate nor a critical introduction—unless by "critical" one means anti–United States.

Written by some eighteen persons (Students? It is unclear who they are.) and published by a "Central American Information Office" (CAMINO—an organization "dedicated to research and to dissemination of information about current problems in Central America"), the book is divided into fourteen chapters, with a text that is 114 pages in length, and has two appendixes, maps, and a glossary. No specific authors are identified with specific portions of the book, so the extent of collaboration among the authors is unclear.

Although in a few of the chapters the authors attempt to provide brief historical backgrounds, the focus is clearly contemporary. The source material used is heavily weighted