



# The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast (Latin America in Translation)

*Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr.*

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Brazil's Northeast has traditionally been considered one of the country's poorest and most underdeveloped areas. In this impassioned work, the Brazilian historian Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr. investigates why Northeasterners are marginalized and stereotyped not only by inhabitants of other parts of Brazil but also by *nordestinos* themselves. His broader question though, is how "the Northeast" came into existence. Tracing the history of its invention, he finds that the idea of the Northeast was formed in the early twentieth century, when elites around Brazil became preoccupied with building a nation. Diverse phenomena—from drought policies to messianic movements, banditry to new regional political blocs—helped to consolidate this novel concept, the Northeast. Politicians, intellectuals, writers, and artists, often *nordestinos*, played key roles in making the region cohere as a space of common references and concerns. Ultimately, Albuquerque urges historians to question received concepts, such as regions and regionalism, to reveal their artifice and abandon static categories in favor of new, more granular understandings.



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