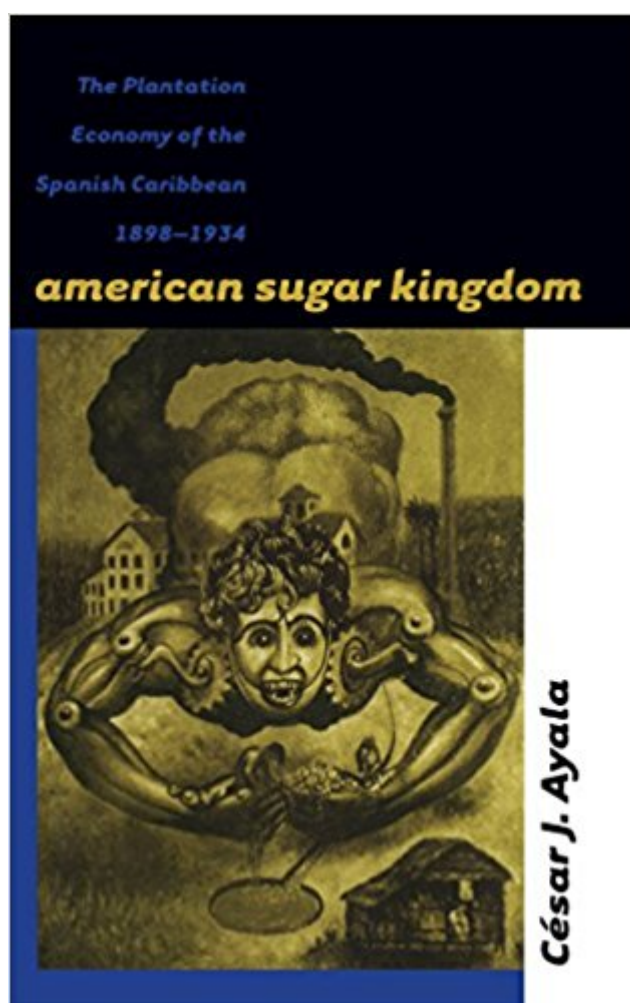


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American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy Of The Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934



Synopsis

Engaging conventional arguments that the persistence of plantations is the cause of economic underdevelopment in the Caribbean, this book focuses on the discontinuities in the development of plantation economies in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic in the early twentieth century. Cesar Ayala analyzes and compares the explosive growth of sugar production in the three nations following the War of 1898--when the U.S. acquired Cuba and Puerto Rico--to show how closely the development of the Spanish Caribbean's modern economic and social class systems is linked to the history of the U.S. sugar industry during its greatest period of expansion and consolidation. Ayala examines patterns of investment and principal groups of investors, interactions between U.S. capitalists and native planters, contrasts between new and old regions of sugar monoculture, the historical formation of the working class on sugar plantations, and patterns of labor migration. In contrast to most studies of the Spanish Caribbean, which focus on only one country, his account places the history of U.S. colonialism in the region, and the history of plantation agriculture across the region, in comparative perspective.

Book Information

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A very welcome addition to the historiography of the Caribbean and to development-underdevelopment theory. "Business History Review" "As meticulous in its research as it is evocative in its approach, Ayala's book is, without doubt, a significant contribution." *Journal of American History* "Both a contribution to the study of the sugar industry in the Caribbean and an

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Ayala has produced an accessible study of sugar in the Spanish Caribbean that will appeal to a broad audience of readers ranging from advanced undergraduates to economists, political scientists, and area specialists. Useful tables and clear, concise maps as well as detailed endnotes and an ample bibliography make this book a valuable reference tool not only for Latin Americanists, but also for anyone with interests as diverse as comparative colonialism and global economics.--AmericasAs scholars move toward work that encompasses whole sectors of the colonial world, it becomes necessary to look at epochs and industries in much the same way. Ayala has done yeoman work in helping us to see how variation in the imperialist enterprise arose from important local differences within the Hispanophone Caribbean. But he also shows how certain regularities (such as wage labor) could surmount local distinctiveness. A handsome addition to our understanding of imperialist and Hispanic history and, of course, of the North American thrust.--Sidney W. Mintz, author of *Worker in the Cane*As meticulous in its research as it is evocative in its approach, Ayala's book is, without doubt, a significant contribution to the complex problem of the Caribbean plantation.--Journal of American HistoryBoth a contribution to the study of the sugar industry in the Caribbean and an examination of the processes of American imperialism in this tropical setting. . . . An excellent book that deserves a wide readership.--American Historical ReviewAn outstanding book. . . . This ambitious project required the author to keep straight the complex interactions of U.S. producers, island sugar systems, and other competitors at a time of major political changes in the U.S. and the Caribbean. Through careful attention to the development

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This book fills a sensible void in the historiographies of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean in the first half of the twentieth century and of the U.S. sugar business during its phases of expansion and consolidation. Marshaling evidence and insights from primary sources and a wide array of secondary literatures, Ayala weaves a fascinating narrative about the making of an international sugar plantation complex. We had previously only seen the general outlines of the story and a few details for individual countries. Now we are treated to the overall sweep, and it is most gratifying.--Francisco A. Scarano, University of Wisconsin-Madison
[This book] is a very welcome addition to the historiography of the Caribbean and to development-underdevelopment theory.--Business History Review

Great book!! Ayala describes, step by step, how American entrepreneurs developed and took over the sugar industry in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic during the first 25 years of the 20th century. US banks grew and played an important role in providing funding.

Excellent read. Fills in many blanks about history.

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