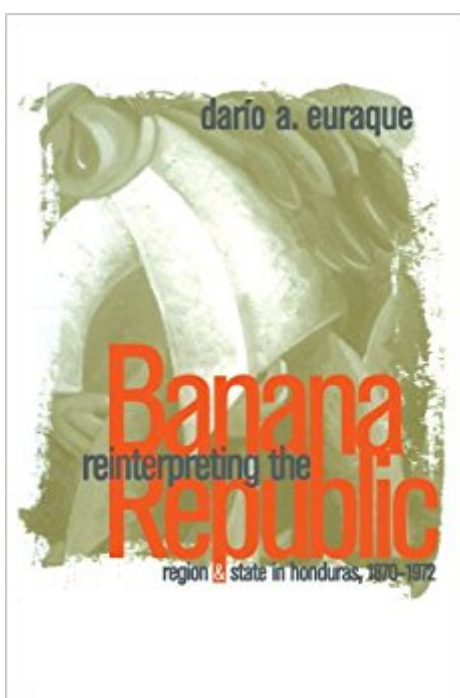


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Reinterpreting The Banana Republic: Region And State In Honduras, 1870-1972



Synopsis

In this new analysis of Honduran social and political development, Dar de la Cruz Euraque explains why Honduras escaped the pattern of revolution and civil wars suffered by its neighbors Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Within this comparative framework, he challenges the traditional Banana Republic 'theory' and its assumption that multinational corporations completely controlled state formation in Central America. Instead, he demonstrates how local society in Honduras's North Coast banana-exporting region influenced national political development. According to Euraque, the reformism of the 1970s, which prevented social and political polarization in the 1980s, originated in the local politics of San Pedro Sula and other cities along the North Coast. Moreover, Euraque shows that by the 1960s, the banana-growing areas had become bastions of liberalism, led by local capitalists and organized workers. This regional political culture directly influenced events at the national level, argues Euraque. Specifically, the military coup of 1972 drew its ideology and civilian leaders from the North Coast, and as a result, the new regime was able to successfully channel popular unrest into state-sponsored reform projects. Based on long-ignored sources in Honduran and American archives and on interviews, the book signals a major reinterpretation of modern Honduran history.

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Reinterpreting the Banana Republic reexamines the development of Honduran government institutions from the vantage point of diverse regions within the country. Especially strong is the finely documented analysis of the North Coast. By showing how a local bourgeoisie, working class, and peasantry emerged in the pores of the banana economy, built their own local institutions in the process, and finally became national political forces after World War II, Euraque defeats on its own turf the Banana Republic thesis, which has been so prominent in Honduran historiography. This big interpretive work, rigorously constructed from a wide range of archival sources, is the long-awaited foundation history for Honduras. It will spawn more scholarly research on the country and will integrate Honduras more thoroughly into the debates on ethnicity, state formation, agrarian structures, and national ideology that have intensified in recent years.--Robert G. Williams, author of States and Social EvolutionA major contribution to the national historiography of Honduras. The history of the region cannot be understood apart from its links to the rest of Honduras or the United States. Indeed, one of Euraques's greatest gifts is showing that the Caribbean coast, typically considered an enclave, had direct and influential ties to the rest of the country.--Latin American Research ReviewA new interpretation of modern Honduran history. . . . Provocative.--American Historical ReviewA meaningful contribution to the literature on Honduras of interest to Central American specialists and to scholars studying questions of state building and economic development.--Choice

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