



In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900–1995 (American Encounters/Global Interactions)

Steve Striffler

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Winner of the 2001 President's Award of the Social Science History Association

In the Shadows of State and Capital tells the story of how Ecuadorian peasants gained, and then lost, control of the banana industry. Providing an ethnographic history of the emergence of subcontracting within Latin American agriculture and of the central role played by class conflict in this process, Steve Striffler looks at the quintessential form of twentieth-century U.S. imperialism in the region—the banana industry and, in particular, the United Fruit Company (Chiquita). He argues that, even within this highly stratified industry, popular struggle has contributed greatly to processes of capitalist transformation and historical change. Striffler traces the entrance of United Fruit into Ecuador during the 1930s, its worker-induced departure in the 1960s, the troubled process through which contract farming emerged during the last half of the twentieth century, and the continuing struggles of those involved. To explore the influence of both peasant activism and state power on the withdrawal of multinational corporations from banana production, Striffler draws on state and popular archives, United Fruit documents, and extensive oral testimony from workers, peasants, political activists, plantation owners, United Fruit administrators, and state bureaucrats. Through an innovative melding of history and anthropology, he demonstrates that, although peasant-workers helped dismantle the foreign-owned plantation, they were unable to determine the broad contours through which the subsequent system of production—contract farming—emerged and transformed agrarian landscapes throughout Latin America.

By revealing the banana industry's impact on processes of state formation in Latin America, *In the Shadows of State and Capital* will interest historians, anthropologists, and political scientists, as well as scholars of globalization and agrarian studies.

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