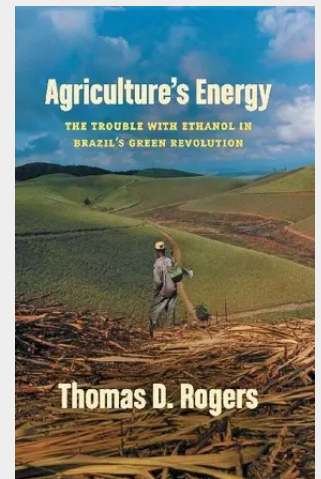


Agriculture's Energy

The Trouble with Ethanol in Brazil's Green Revolution

Thomas D. Rogers's history of a modernizing Brazil tracks what happened when a key government program—created in the 1970s by the nation's military regime—aspired to harness energy produced by sugarcane agriculture to power the country's economy. The National Alcohol Program, known as Proalcohol, was a deliberate economic strategy designed to incentivize ethanol production and reduce gasoline consumption. As Brazil's capacity grew and as international oil shocks continued, the regime's planners doubled down on Proalcohol. Drawing financing from international lenders and curiosity from other oil-dependent countries, for a time it was the world's largest oil-substitution and renewable-energy program. Chronicling how Proalcohol experimented with and exemplified the consolidation of government, agribusiness, large planters, agricultural and chemical research companies, and oil producers, this book expands into a rich investigation of the arc of Brazil's Green Revolution. The ethanol boom epitomized the vector of that arc, but Rogers keeps in view the wider development imperatives. He dramatizes the choices and trade-offs that ultimately resulted in a losing energy strategy, for Proalcohol ended up creating a large contingent of impoverished workers, serious environmental degradation, and persistent hunger. The full consequences of the Green Revolution—fueled consolidation are still taking a toll today.

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