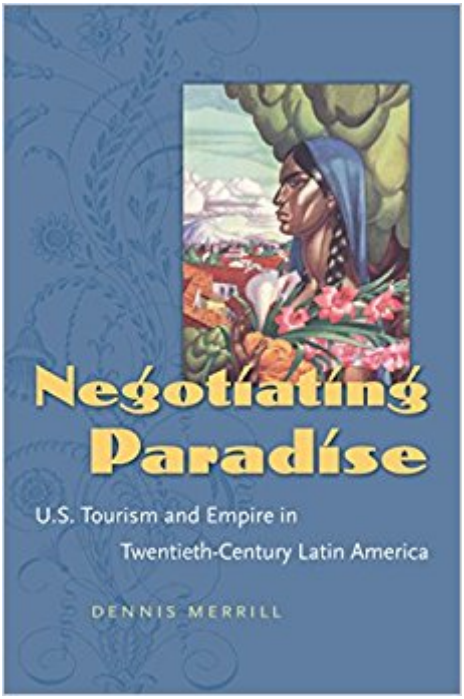
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Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism And Empire In Twentieth-Century Latin America



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Synopsis

Accounts of U.S. empire building in Latin America typically portray politically and economically powerful North Americans descending on their southerly neighbors to engage in lopsided negotiations. Dennis Merrill’s comparative history of U.S. tourism in Latin America in the twentieth century demonstrates that empire is a more textured, variable, and interactive system of inequality and resistance than commonly assumed. In his examination of interwar Mexico, early Cold War Cuba, and Puerto Rico during the Alliance for Progress, Merrill demonstrates how tourists and the international travel industry facilitated the expansion of U.S. consumer and cultural power in Latin America. He also shows the many ways in which local service workers, labor unions, business interests, and host governments vied to manage the Yankee invasion. While national leaders negotiated treaties and military occupations, visitors and hosts navigated interracial encounters in bars and brothels, confronted clashing notions of gender and sexuality at beachside resorts, and negotiated national identities. Highlighting the everyday realities of U.S. empire in ways often overlooked, Merrill’s analysis provides historical context for understanding the contemporary debate over the costs and benefits of globalization.

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Customer Reviews

An excellent example of how interesting ’diplomatic history’ can be when one looks beyond the diplomats. . . . Fascinating. . . . This absorbing, entertaining and revealing story is a widely applicable model for future upbeat case studies of tourism in other parts of the world.--American

Historical ReviewSophisticated and nuanced. . . . Required reading for those interested in the development of tourism in Latin America, cultural enthusiasts . . . and students of Latin American history. Through a masterful blend of theoretical interpretation, the thoughtful use of accounts gleaned from archives, and a thorough understanding of U.S.-Latin American relations, Merrill has created a standard that will remain relevant for years to come in the fields of foreign relations and tourism development.--Florida Historical QuarterlyMerrill's prose, much like good travel writing, is clear and engaging throughout . . . . His work should be discovered and read widely by those in tourism studies and Latin American studies, who will come away with much that is valuable.--The AmericasOffers the reader a nuanced understanding of how tourism, U.S. expansionism, and nationalist projects intertwine.--NACLA Report on the Americas[A] beautifully researched book. . . . Negotiating Paradise will undoubtedly provoke fruitful debate.--Journal of American HistoryReminds its readers that tourism played many roles in the operation of the United States' twentieth-century empire, that it emerged as a major force through both conflict and cooperation between and among multiple constituencies, and that its histories have been crucial in shaping interpersonal and international hemispheric relations.--American QuarterlyNot only refreshing but illuminating. . . . Equally informative and engaging. . . . The quality of the scholarship is high, the co-organisation of the cultural and political material is always thoughtful and insightful, and the structural and 'agency' perspectives and insights offered are convincing and powerful.--Journal of Latin American Studies[A] first-rate book on U.S. tourism to Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.--Kristin Hoganson, H-DiploAn admirable work of research and information for scholars.--Journal of Enterprise & SocietyA long-awaited and immensely rich addition to the burgeoning literature on travel, tourism, and foreign relations. . . . The text deserves a wide audience among scholars of U.S. foreign relations, Latin American history, and cultural studies.--Laura A. Belmonte, H-DiploThis comparative history of US tourism in Latin America in the 20th century shows that empire is a more textured, variable and interactive system of inequality and resistance than commonly assumed.--Abstracts of Public Administration, Development, and EnvironmentPoint[s] the way to new approaches to empire.--Louis Perez, H-DiploMerrill makes another good case for examining tourism through the new diplomatic lens.--Dina Berger, H-Diplo

Merrill has written an important and persuasive book. Looking behind the beachfront resorts and casinos, he reveals how Latin Americans and Yankees engaged in a high-stakes contest over empire, profits, and national identity. Merrill offers cutting-edge ideas on international history and globalization with colorful material and superb storytelling.--Christopher Endy, author of Cold War

Holidays: American Tourism in FranceMerrill makes a significant contribution by showing how tourism complemented the U.S. drive toward hegemony and empire in Latin America. His cultural approach puts this study in the vanguard of recent work in diplomatic history. An excellent book.--Mark T. Gilderhus, Texas Christian University

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