



*Central America:  
A Quest for the Progression of  
Economic Value.  
Season IV.*

The origin of Central America political-economy.

Period of study: From 1700 to 1900

**Episode 13**  
**Sugar-Sugar**  
**Introduction.**

[www.eleonoraescalantestrategy.com](http://www.eleonoraescalantestrategy.com)

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Outline Calendar

**Season IV goes from 19 September to 31 December 2025**

<p>19-Sept-2025</p> <p>Episode 1 ✓</p> <p>Mexican Influence in Central America</p> 	<p>26-Sept-2025</p> <p>Episode 2 ✓</p> <p>Derailment of violence and inner conflicts between Spaniards and Indians</p> 	<p>3 and 10-Oct-2025</p> <p>Episode 3 &amp; 4 ✓</p> <p>Independence Bells (1800-1823) Part I Independence Bells Part II</p> 	<p>17-Oct-2025</p> <p>Episode 5 ✓</p> <p>United Provinces of Central America (1823-1840)</p> 	<p>24-Oct-2025</p> <p>Episode 6 ✓</p> <p>A voyage after the Republics Separation (1840-1870)</p> 
<p>31-Oct-2025</p> <p>Episode 7 ✓</p> <p>Philosophical Foundations of Agricultural Liberalism 1870-1900</p> 	<p>7-Nov-2025</p> <p>Episode 8 ✓</p> <p>When there is no precious metals?. Agricultural commodities in Central America</p> 	<p>14-Nov-2025</p> <p>Episode 9 ✓</p> <p>The consolidation of the Hacienda Model in Spanish America</p> 	<p>21-Nov-2025</p> <p>Episode 10 ✓</p> <p>The Golden Bean of Coffee in Central America</p> 	<p>28-Nov-2025</p> <p>Episode 11 ✓</p> <p>The Indigo Courage in Central America.</p> 
<p>5-Dec-2025</p> <p>Episode 12 ✓</p> <p>The Cacao Pilot Scoop of Central America.</p> 	<p>12-Dec-2025</p> <p>Episode 13 ✓</p> <p>Sugar Sugar Introduction part I.</p> 	<p>19-Dec-2025</p> <p>Episode 13 ✓</p> <p>ANNUAL MANDATORY HOLIDAY BREAK We will return to work on January 5<sup>th</sup>.</p> 	<p><b>HAPPY HOLIDAYS</b></p>	

See you next year 2026 with the extension of this saga. It will be the final and last season V.

*This outline is subject to change if the author considers it appropriate for your learning experience.*



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Outline Calendar

### Season V From January 2<sup>nd</sup> to March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

<div>9-jan-2026</div> <div>Episode 1</div> <div>Sugar-Sugar America Part I</div> <div></div>	<div>16-jan-2026</div> <div>Episode 2</div> <div>Sugar-Sugar America Part II</div> <div></div>	<div>23-jan-2026</div> <div>Episode 3</div> <div>Sugar-Sugar Central America Part III</div> <div></div>	<div>30-jan-2026</div> <div>Episode 4</div> <div>Cattle, Livestock and Foodstuff Central America Part I</div> <div></div>	<div>6-feb-2026</div> <div>Episode 5</div> <div>Cattle, Livestock and Foodstuff Central America Part II</div> <div></div>
<div>13-feb-2026</div> <div>Episode 6</div> <div>Bananas joining the Plateau of Central America 19th century Part I</div> <div></div>	<div>20-feb-2026</div> <div>Episode 7</div> <div>Banana Republics Central America Part II</div> <div></div>	<div>27-feb-2026</div> <div>Episode 8</div> <div>Banana Republics Central America Part III</div> <div></div>	<div>6-mar-2026</div> <div>Episode 9</div> <div>Summary and Conclusions Seasons I and II</div> <div></div>	<div>13-mar-2026</div> <div>Episode 10</div> <div>Summary and Conclusions Seasons III, IV and V</div> <div></div>
<div>20-mar-2026</div> <div>Episode 11</div> <div>Research Agenda for the future</div> <div></div>	<div>From 21-March to 5-April 2026</div> <div>Safeguarding Pause</div> <div>Maintenance Break and Easter Week vacations.</div> <div></div>	<div>Next Academic Sagas 2026</div> <div>Coffee and Cacao 101 Strategies for Family Farm Small-Holders</div> <div>Human Talent: From Feudal Slave to Chatel Serfdom to Wage Labor to Digital Beggar</div>		<div>Program dates</div> <div>From 6th of April to 17th of July 2026.</div> <div>From 10th of August to 11th of December 2026.</div>



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV

## A piece of the economic puzzle of Spanish Central America in Four Seasons



Big Picture of our Content.

Season IV as of 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2025.

Season	Start Date	Finish Date	Number of episodes	Historical Timeline to Analyze	Main General themes
One (I) Autumn -Winter 2024	October 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	December 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	13 episodes	1492-1558	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical foundations</li> <li>Castile &amp; Aragon: Discovery of Spanish America, the Holy Roman Empire</li> <li>Charles V Holy Roman Emperor: his local, personal, regional, religious, and international agenda</li> <li>The Spanish Inquisition</li> </ul>
Two (II) Winter-Spring 2025	January 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025	13 episodes	1492-1700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spanish America with a Medieval Allure: Conquest and Colonization</li> <li>Understanding the economics philosophy of the Habsburgs Rulers in Central America: Philip II, Philip III, Philip IV, and Charles II.</li> <li>Commodities: Mining extraction of precious metal reserves</li> </ul>
Three (III) Spring-Summer 2025	May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025	August 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	14 episodes	1700-1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School of Salamanca</li> <li>The Bourbon era begins. From Philip V (1683-1746) to Alfonso XIII (1886-1941)</li> <li>The War of Spanish Succession</li> <li>The Jesuit Suppression and Restoration (1773-1814)</li> <li>The meaning of the French Revolution in Spanish America</li> <li>The Why of Napoleon Bonaparte</li> </ul>
Four (IV) Autumn-Winter 2025	September 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025	15 episodes	1700-1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independence Bells of Central America (1800-23)</li> <li>United Provinces of Central America (1823-40)</li> <li>Derailment of violence and inner conflicts</li> <li>Charted Urban vs Forgotten Rural</li> <li>Mining + Agricultural Commodities. Never an Industrial Factory Development.</li> <li>Main agriculture production industries: Cacao, Indigo, coffee, sugar, livestock, bananas.</li> <li>What´s next?</li> </ul>

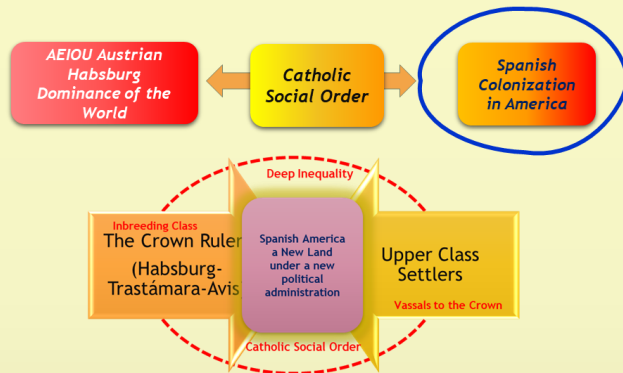


# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction



*“Most of good historians are chroniclers of events. A Chronicler narrates, but doesn’t explain the facts.*

*Before proceeding further in our civilization, corporate strategists are obliged to understand the different explanations and interpretations of history. Otherwise, history will repeat under new circumstances”.*

Eleonora Escalante Strategy. El Salvador

*Our agenda for today’s master class:*

### *Sugar-Sugar America-Introduction*

- 1. Plantations in the Transatlantic System*
- 2. History of Sugar as a Commodity until the discovery of America*
- 3. Original Primitive Value Chain*
- 4. Happy Holidays! See you next year.*

Our next chapter (on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026) will be about:  
**General Discussion about the primitive sugar value chain, the Rise of sugar crops at the West Indies between 1500 to 1850, and Sugar conflicts between the Empires**

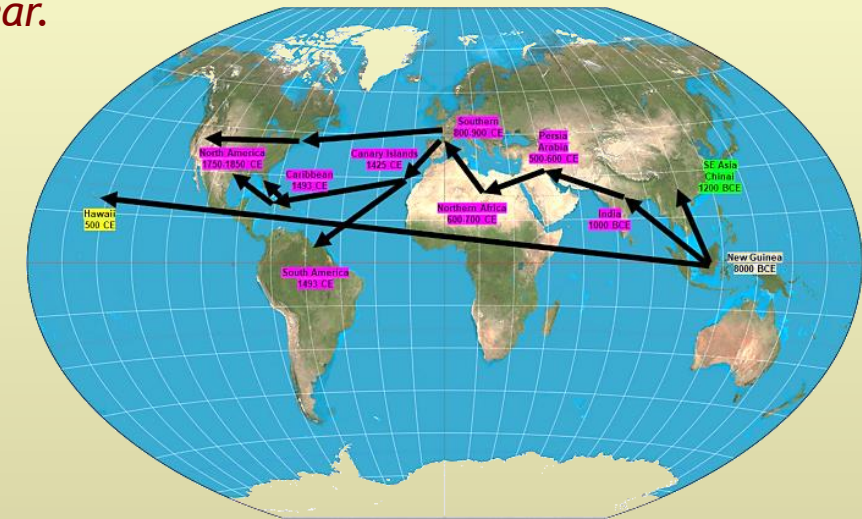


Image source: Domestication itinerary of sugar cane fields and production  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10722-022-01430-6>

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

What was the philosophical approach behind the plantations as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

The plantation complex business model was a global phenomenon of its time. It modified the premises of trade.

#### Premises of Trade, before the Transatlantic Plantations Model

- Merchants moved staples and luxury items across long distances using ancient routes by sea and land in what has been defined as Afro-Eurasian trading zones.
- **Sea Transfer Commerce:** existed actively using the port city trading network along the coastline of Asia and the Indian ocean basin. Vessels operated from southern China, the Malay peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago, to the Malabar and Coromandel shorelines of South Asia, the Persian Gulf, Red sea and along East Africa. Sea traders rarely connected the entire circuit but operated within short or mid distance routes that linked regions.
- The port cities were distribution centers for products from the continental lands to other territories. Asia played a core role with the ports of Macau, Guangzhou, and Quanzhou. Melaka, Aceh-Sumatra too. India's maritime zones were Surat, Bengal, Calicut, Goa and Masulipatam (Andhra Pradesh, India). East Africa: Mogadishu, Kilwa. Persian Gulf and Middle East Coasts: Hormuz, Aden (Yemen).
- **Land Transfer Logistics:** The ancient silk transportation roads were complemented by the maritime trade. Caravans of camels, horses and merchant wayfarers transported luxury item merchandises: as silks, precious stones and metals, musk perfumes, embroidered fabrics, dyes, woolen, cotton cloth, ceramics, delicate personal items, candles and other small finished goods. Asian Merchants crossed land routes from the east of China, northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, across Iran, Iraq, Armenia to Southern Russia and the Byzantium.
- **The Mediterranean sea circuit to enter Europe:** The Mediterranean sea was the commercial lake that interconnected Africa, Asia and Europe. From the Levant, the Red Sea to Egypt. From Crimea and Istanbul into the Aegean Sea.
- The North Italian merchants of Venice, Genoa, Padua and Florence were the experts in acquiring Asian and African merchandise from their agents in Cairo, Alexandria, Istanbul, Damascus and other Mediterranean coastline cities and brought them to Europe.



#### Premises of Trade, after the Transatlantic Plantations Model

- After the Portuguese found its way to Goa surrounding Africa, and after Columbus discovered the West Indies and Central America, the age of discovery allowed a horizontal expansion (new international hubs of production and consumption) that required massive migration of inhabitants and workers.
- The transformation of the trade system involved the systemic appearance of the plantations societies at the other side of the Atlantic, which also kicked off the same model in India and Africa later.
- The climate conditions of the West Indies, New Spain, Tierra Firme, Perú and the Kingdom of Guatemala allowed the monarchical decision making of exploring the New World natural resources and cultivate commodities for the emergence of new products destined to pave the foundation of currency based on gold and silver from America, and it expanded using the old Afro-Eurasian trading zones.
- For the first time in history, merchants traded and moved commodities (agrarian as the case of sugar and cotton) and metals (as the case of silver and gold). And this shift of products gave birth to a transnational commercial structure in the Atlantic, which extended its way to China and India.
- It was during the 16<sup>th</sup> century that sugar and silver from the Americas defined the new trading circuits that required enslaved labor (available from Africa), new financial innovation (banks, financial instruments, international credit and transfers, stock exchange and secondary markets, etc.)
- Joint stock companies chartered by the English and Dutch kingdoms entered the game of trade, and the maritime naval industry was transformed. The Brit East India Company and the Dutch East India Company opened the world for the Multinational Corporations of today.



The sugar cane plantations (and cotton) was the main crop that helped to develop the transatlantic plantation system. Its foundations changed the economic and philosophical understandings of European Society

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



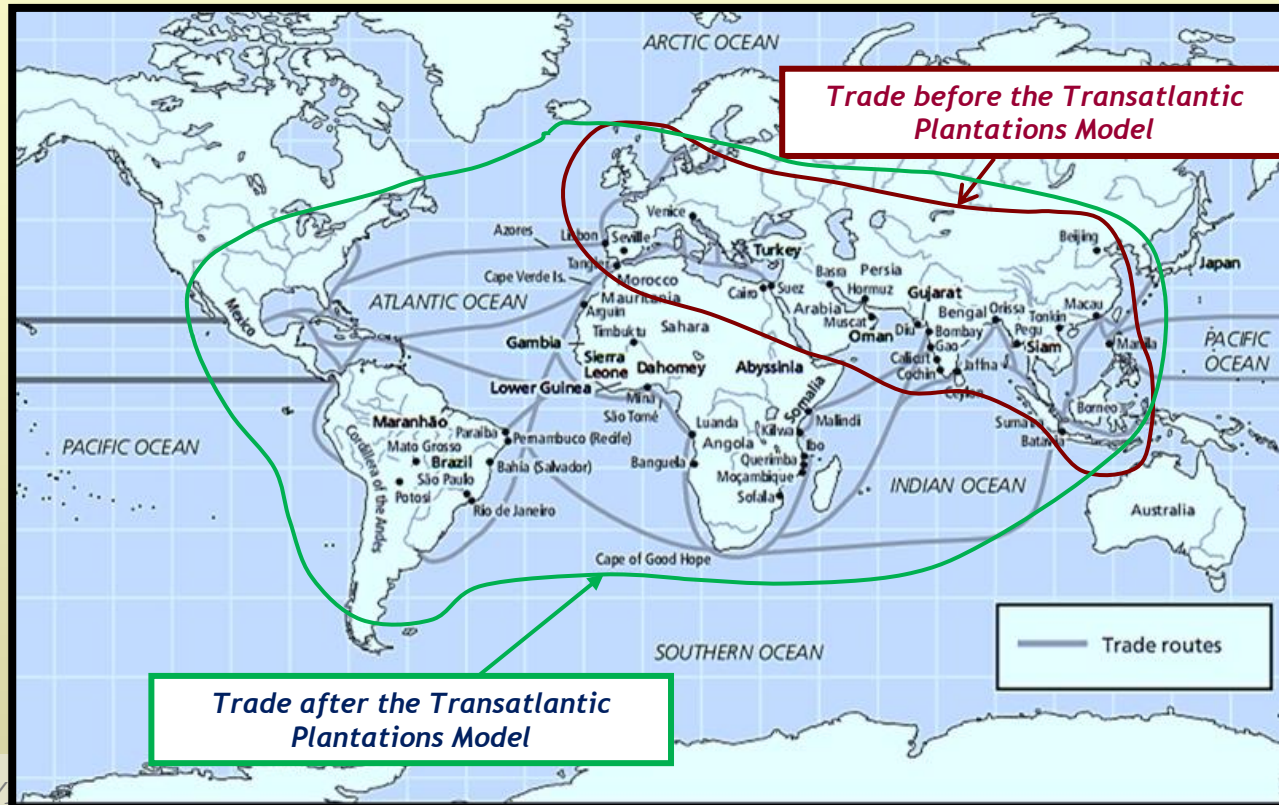
### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

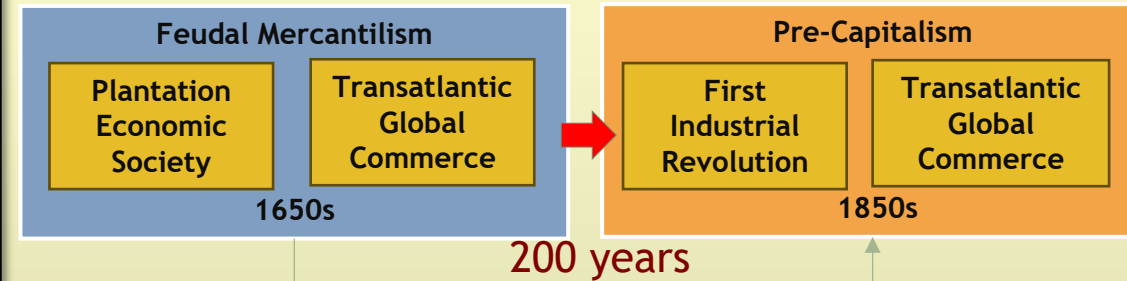
What was the philosophical approach behind the plantations as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

The sugar cane plantation model in Central America was initially in the hands of the Catholic monastic orders. Their haciendas were the sources for domestic supply, and never for exports before the Independence movements of 1821.

The plantations in parallel to silver mines extraction were driving the transatlantic flows of production, capital and labor.



Without the agrarian commodities of the new world, the transatlantic global commerce system wouldn't have been possible. And neither capitalism.



We will explore “deeply” the roots and development of the plantation economics, using sugar as its reference point.  
We will dedicate three additional episodes in January 2026 to cover this topic.



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



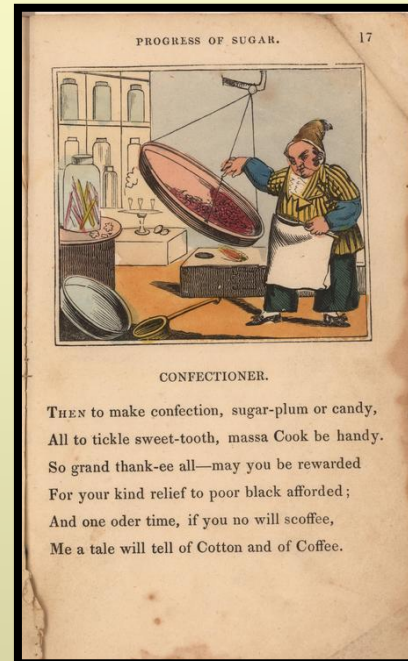
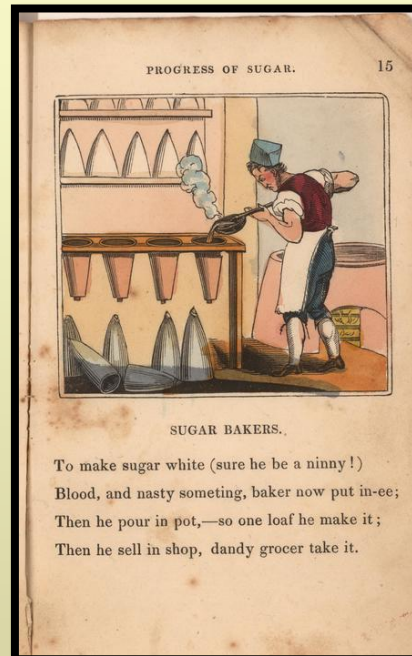
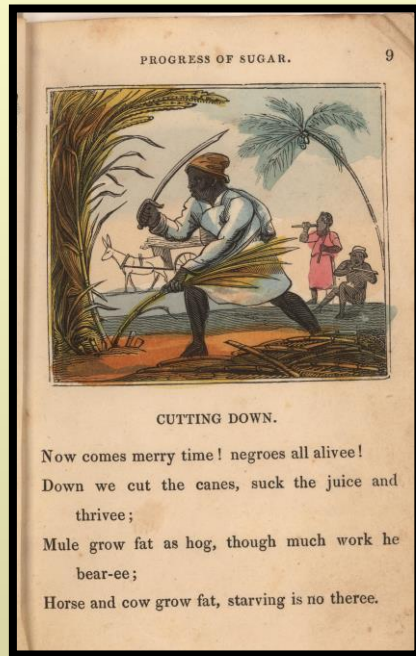
### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

How to explain the general plantation model in simple terms?

*This author explains to children, the business model of sugar production using slave labor in West Indies plantation cane fields to sugar refineries in British port cities, and finally, to confectioners' shops.*

The sugar cane plantations were the innovation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century introduced by the Aviz dynasty of Portugal in Brazil, and by Columbus in the West Indies.



*It is crucial for us to be aware of the plantations model when it comes to the transition from feudal mercantilism to pre-capitalism. We will study the particularities of sugar business models next year.*

The new trading routes of the Americas transatlantic system eroded the traditional trading relationships with merchants who distributed products coming from Asia, and its European resellers.

To be a trader or merchant with the Americas (at any part of its agrarian value chain) required:

1. Obtaining supply-demand information
2. Master the world seas: Hiring the navigational skills for long-distance trade
3. Knowledge of the plantations (nature of local commodities)
4. Understanding of Exports-Imports-reexport conventions: Currencies and conversion rates, duties, local weights, measures
5. Access to capital (credit)
6. The novelty: to save on labor costs through slavery



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

#### Definition of Plantation

*The first plantations of our history are related to sugar. These sugar cane farms model started in the late Middle Ages in Europe*

### THREE DEFINITIONS

*Plantation is a large agricultural enterprise in a tropical country, managed for profit, that produced an export crop for sale in Europe and elsewhere, and which had a labor force that was hierarchically stratified. Trevor Burnard.*

*Plantation is a large scale, labor intensive agricultural operation that developed primarily in the Americas and produced massive quantities of staple crops for both, the domestic and international markets. EBSCO*

*Plantation is a large-scale single unit of agricultural production that raised crops for export. It required a substantial workforce to plant, tend, harvest and process staple commodities for export, usually to Europe. (Christer Petley, Oxford)*

*Six features define the general plantation business model implemented between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries*

Labor Force  
by racism

Enslavement  
(mainly  
African)

Lack of  
Occupational  
Security

Led by  
Merchant  
Enterprises

Maritime  
Distant  
Markets

Inside  
Colonial  
Societies

During our period of analysis, there have detected different leading business models of sugar cane plantations

1. The Brazilian Portuguese Model (Madeira)
2. The Barbados British Model
3. The Java Dutch Model
4. The Cuban-Caribbean Spanish Model

The plantation economics contributed as an essential element to shape the premises of commerce and trade.

- There are different sugar business models. When analyzing the North-American Plantation model, originally, most of the plantation workers during the early colonial period in USA were white indentured servants of the old feudal model of Europe.
- In the West Indies (Caribbean), New Spain, Brazil and Peru, the plantation model was not unique. Each empire retained elements of medieval feudalism by invading and seizing the land of the Native pre-Hispanic populations, and planting what was suitable given its climate conditions. But each with its own particularities.
- In the Kingdom of Guatemala, during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Mayan inhabitants became subjects to the King and were owned by the Monarchs in exchange for tribute. This was different with the Aztecs, and with the Incas.
- However, because the Native Indian encomiendas were the trophies for the Spaniards, the Native Indians were used according to the needs and wants of each Spaniard resident: cheap domestic helpers, plantation workers, chattel slaves, and later as urban/rural indebted wage workers. When the plantations of cacao, indigo and sugar started, the indigenous were used as bound labor, but its dramatic decline in less than 70 years after the conquest, triggered to replace them with African slaves.
- In Central America, sugar cane was planted mainly in Catholic haciendas and their respective sugar mills.

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

#### Plantations Societies in America

The origins of the world food economy are linked to sugar global production



The plantation model thrived where the government was weak or absent. So, plantations became political institutions of order and social organization. Plantations in America with slaves have survived for more than 400 years using violence to control the coerced labor.

The plantations model thrived in conditions of cheap open resources

#### Low-Cost Strategy

- To justify slavery of black skin Africans the plantations model required a philosophical premise: Racism.
- Additionally, the sugar cane business model was not invented with the discovery of America, it was an existing one that was already operating in the Mediterranean (with imported slaves) long before 1502.

Perfect climate conditions

Land



Water



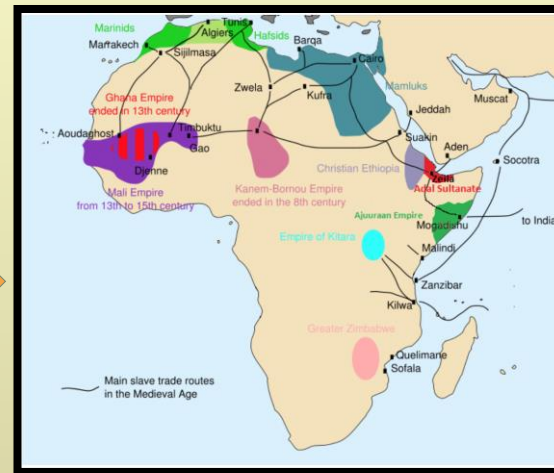
Local shortage labor



Solution:  
Import Slaves

The new world plantations were Europe's first significant source of food from elsewhere.

The tropical climate and cheap open resources allowed sugar cane to be established.



<https://www.abhmuseum.org/en/slaved-peoples-in-african-societies-before-the-transatlantic-slave-trade/>

Eleonora Escalante Strategy

State of the Art Corporate Strategy  
All rights reserved. Copyright 2016-2025

- We have bumped into several scholars who have written about the original roots of the plantation business model.
- It seems that sugar was the origin of the expansion of empires, and not silver or gold (scarce goods that were condemned to stop after the natural resource was totally extracted).
- Sugar cane was the first global crop that was established under the plantation business model.
- The journey of the sugar cane business model to America began when it was transferred from the Mediterranean basin islands of Cyprus, Crete, to the acquired Portuguese islands of Madeira, the Azores, the Cape Verdes and Sao Tomé.
- The sugar business model was originally rooted with the Arabs, who took part of the Eastern European side, including Cyprus.
- Slavery was used, as it was an historical practice, since the times of Plato-Sócrates. The origins of slavery in the Mediterranean were the war's prisoners of the loser territories.
- Captives were made slaves by their captors and used as forced labor.

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Plantations in the Transatlantic System

#### Planters and Slaves

*The option to plant sugar (or cotton or tobacco) in the newly American discovered continent created two social types or classes: The planter and the slaves*

#### Low-Cost Strategy Sugar

##### Slaves

- As mentioned in our last slide, slaves always existed in the history of mankind. The winner of warfare for territories was the captor of the captives.
- However, the plantation slave working in sugar cultivation were of black skin color.
- Slaves were extreme poor. Slaves were exploited as unpaid labor. Legally unfree.
- Slaves were bound to work under chattel slavery: enslaved people were personal property of their owners for life, that could be bid, traded or sold as livestock.
- Slaves obeyed, because there was a violent intimidation authority from the planter to threaten and menace them.
- Slaves' psychological mindset: helpless, worthless and dependent upon the planter's goodwill.
- Slave culture and traditions: coerced workers and unwilling migrants. They tried to recreate in the Americas what they left behind in Africa.

##### Planters

- Planters of sugar fields were usually linked to private enterprises or royal state backed companies.
- Planters were usually of white skin color (Europeans or European descendants)
- Planters were rich
- Planters relied on their slaves for their wealth accumulation
- Planters were enslavers: They had complete control over the bodies and lives of those they enslaved as much as of their children.
- Planters used slavery because it was profitable: after the return of the investment, every slave (and family) continued as non-paid labor.
- Planters ordered and led as the plantation society aristocrats
- Planters refused to recognize slaves as fully human or as having human rights or land. They saw black people as inferior.
- Planters installed brutal methods of slave management to install fear (punishment, humiliation, sadism, death).

The plantation model in the American Continent and the Caribbean began only when sugar was introduced to the Netherlands through Lisbon. From Antwerp, sugar was re-exported to England. In consequence: the Portuguese supplied sugar into Europe as of the mid 16th century

- The low-cost strategy of any commodity is based in cheap or null cost of labor. This is slavery, which has multiple formats.
- The plantation system of the West Indies, Brazil and Southern parts of USA was an economic institution. It was the foundation for prosperity of multiple players of the sugar value chain.
- Other plantations as cotton or tobacco, also allowed new colonies to expand and thrive as they shipped these high-demanded staples into Europe.
- Tropical territories became the cultivation garden of the world in less than 200 years, or until slavery was abolished by mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Plantation societies were regions of the America that were defined by plantation agriculture and plantation labor regimes.
- Most of the traditional archaic plantation' societies proved non-profitable when slavery was abolished, leaving the production of sugar in specific hubs of to our days.



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

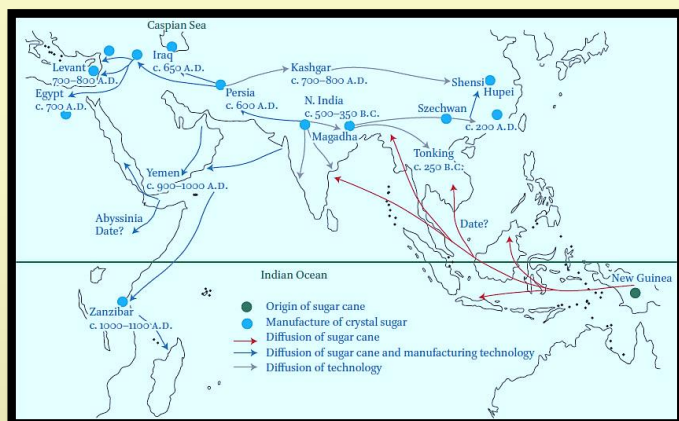


### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

*How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?*



Map Source: Gernalzick, Nadja, Gabriela Campagnol, and Jamie Karnik. "Geography of World Sugar Production and History of Labor in Sugar: Maps and Graphs". In *The Mediality of Sugar*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2022)

- To trace the story of sugar in its successive stages, compelled us to appreciate how this "food" product passed from a luxury scarce significance to a massive commodity in 200 years.
- Additionally, it take us to explore the roots of capitalism, in such a way that you will be able to grasp where in time our current corporate strategy models are wrong.
- We decided to change our outline, in our quest to show you where is the essence foundation of the problem.
- According to Ellis, "it is doubtful whether any other economic good has so consistently been associated with the great forces and peoples that have been most representative of the different periods of the world's history".

The sugar cane and its processing value chain established a pattern of 6 core factors:

1. Unit of land in a tropical-subtropical region
2. Commercial agriculture crop (with strong demand) was raised
3. The production had clients for sale in the markets of Euroe (with profits for all)
4. Labor was supplied by Non-European slaves (primarily African).
5. Land and means of production were owned and managed by European planters
6. European planters were subject to the sovereignty of the respective European royal kingdom.



*The voyage of the sugar cane cultivation began probably in New Guinea, and after a long way (see timeline below), sugar cane was introduced to Brazil by the Portuguese as of 1530. In Spanish America, it was introduced in Hispaniola island in 1502 by Columbus. From there, the production was spread out to the rest of the West-Indies islands. The Refining section of the product was made mainly in the Netherlands.*





# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?

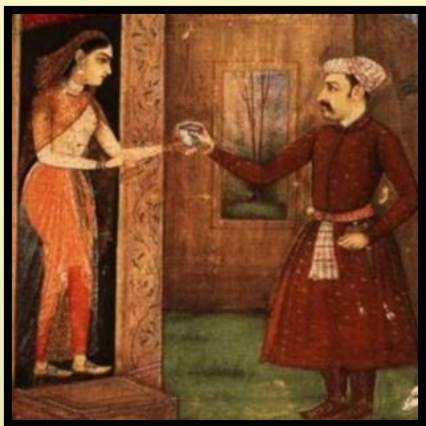


Image Source:  
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/hssa/index.php/hssa/article/view/58>

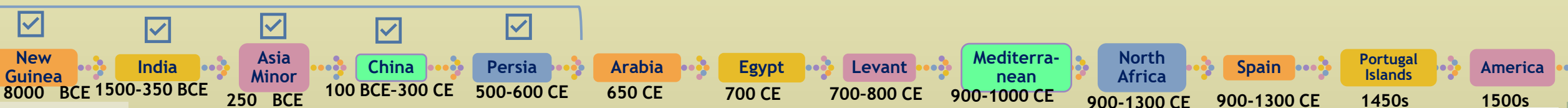
- Our journey begins in India (500-350 BCE). Sugar cane was used as a regular article of food. It is believed that the geographic culture of sugar cane cultivation began in Bengal.
- However, several sources indicate that sugar cane domestication began in Papua New Guinea.
- What is true, is that Indians were the first ones to extract the sugar cane juice to produce raw sugar. This leave us with the idea that they knew how to crystalize by boiling it. It is suggested that Indians kept this secret for several centuries.
- Emperor Darius, king of Persia (r. 522-486 BCE) arrived at India and observed that there were “plants that produced honey without the need of bees”.
- Even the name “Saccharum” was attributed to the word Sakkar or Sukkar by the Arabs who took the sugar cane from India to expand its domestic cultivation later into their own territories.
- Europeans, learned about sugar first from Alexander the Great militaries. They brought sugar cane in 327 BCE from India, but at

- this time, they also observed certain domestic cultivation in Egypt, Arabia and Western Asia. Sugar cane was crushed and converted into a liquid, but never in sufficient quantities to make it commercially valuable. Additionally, honey was considered better,
- The Greek civilization also knew about the sugar cane planting and processing. But its production was never essential. It was an element of luxury and medicine, reserved only for the high-class.
  - Between 500 BCE and 500 CE, sugar cane continued to spread its cultivation all over Asia Minor, the South of China, Persia, and the Arabian lands. Sugar cane remnants have been found in Jondisapur, around the Tigris Valley, used for medicinal properties. Geographer Karl Ritter affirms that sugar was never refined until the Arab physicians discovered it as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE.
  - During these 10 centuries, we perceive that Romans began to cultivate commercial sugar cane crops, using slaves taken from their conquests and battles.

#### The sugar cane in ASIA:

Between 500 BCE to 650 CE, the labor to cultivate sugar cane was in the hands of the peasants, who processed it manually and consumed it in raw-liquid form. Slavery was used just in the territories conquered by expanding domains, as Imperial Rome.

#### Sugar Cane in Asia



19/12/2025

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

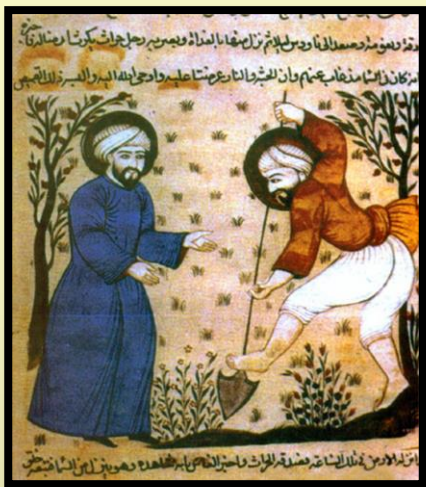


### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?



- The presence of Muhammad conquests all over the Middle-East, Egypt, Northern Africa up to all the Sassanian Empire changed the world as it was as of 632 CE.
- This changed the rationale of trade between Asia to Europe.
- During this Muslim supremacy period, the cultivation of sugar cane with the irrigation systems invented by the Arabs was introduced to Syria and Palestine between the 7<sup>th</sup> century up to the times of the first Crusade.
- From Palestine, the Arabs carried the cane over the islands of the Mediterranean Sea: Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta, Morea and Sicily.
- Sicily coined a high branding name by producing sugar yields with excellent quality as of the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. The Venetians and Genoese merchants oversaw the selling and distribute it in refined sugar. But as an element of luxury.
- Muslims extended the sugar cane cultivation and processes all over its territories when entering the North African coast and the Iberian Peninsula between the years 711 to 1492 under the Syrian Umayyad period, the Spanish

- Umayyad Caliphate, the dynasties of Al-Andalus Cordoba, the Taifas, Almoravid, Almohad and Nasrid. There are several referent points of sugar plantations during this time, particularly Morocco, and Ceuta in the Straits of Gibraltar.
- Spain did not cultivated extensively sugar in their own native soil, which explains why the Spanish and Portuguese procured sources of supply once they discovered new territories in the Atlantic.
- Refining of sugar began in this period and it also raised up to considerable proportions, never seen before.
- The plantations of sugar of the Mediterranean attracted the Venetian and Genoese traders, while the crusades amplified the acceptance of its taste in comparison to honey.
- Venice became the seat of the sugar trade by the time of the first crusade, and it founded there its refining center as of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The sugar cane in the Levant and Mediterranean:

The Muslims (Mahommedans) were the ones who first surmounted the sugar cane crops to a large scale. Everywhere the Muslims expanded, the sugar change harvest and processing principles spread with them.

Image Source <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/en/recomendacion-lectura/the-arabic-legacy-in-western-agriculture-and-wellbeing>

#### Sugar Cane in the Levant and Mediterranean







# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?

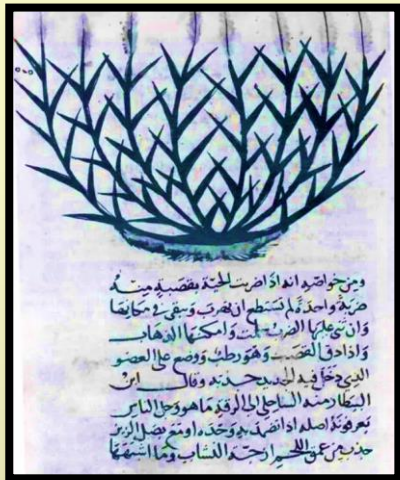


Image Source Page from a 14th century manuscript of Ibn al-Bitar's "Book of Simples" depicting sugar cane.  
<https://sacredfootsteps.com/2022/09/07/as-sukkar-azucar-the-bitter-inheritance-of-andalusi-sugar/>

- Before the expansion of sugar cane fields into the new Islands discovered by Portugal during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the world of trade was between Europe and the East. But look at the situation with a magnifier lent: Trade with the East was essentially with items of luxury. Those who could buy the lavish and expensive products from the east (including sugar) were among the wealthy royals and nobles.
  - The desire for showing off Oriental imported things created a Northern Europe demand, and merchants (as a new class) emerged all over the trajectory from Asia and India. The Venetians and Genoese Merchants established themselves as the top maritime states, building a monopoly of goods coming from China, India, Arabia/Persia.
  - The crusades recruited, mobilized and transported people from Europe to the Holy Land and vice versa. Northern Europeans learned then, about sugar plantations directly, but left its trade in the hands of the Merchants from Venice, Genoa, Pisa and other Italian cities.
- When the Ottoman Turks closed off all the eastern Mediterranean to European access, sugar in the Mediterranean islands was its main

- source of supply. It was in Crete and Cyprus that the problem of labor force was solved by the imports of slaves at a numerous quantity. Before sugar was planted in the Mediterranean, at the Muslim cities of Northern Africa, slaves were sold only to the rich and wealthy. However, as of sugar plantations in the Mediterranean, slavery was implanted in the business model organically.
- Sugar plantations on the Norman Island kingdom of Cyprus and Crete was born with slavery: prisoners of Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey and black Africans were brought from Northern Africa. **The model of sugar and slavery was established.**
  - The Muslims also consolidated the main western commercial hubs. The presence of the Muslims in Northern Africa opened the door to the Portuguese royal family Aviz to settle new alternative production centers of gold dust, slaves and sugar.

#### Sugar Cane in the Mediterranean and Iberia





# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

**The sugar cane at the Iberian Peninsula:**  
The introduction of sugar in Spain was the stepping-stone over which the cultivation of sugar remained after the Moors were expelled from the Peninsula.  
The Sugar Cane Fields of Granada and Andalusia were treasured at its fullest importance as an economic good then.

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?

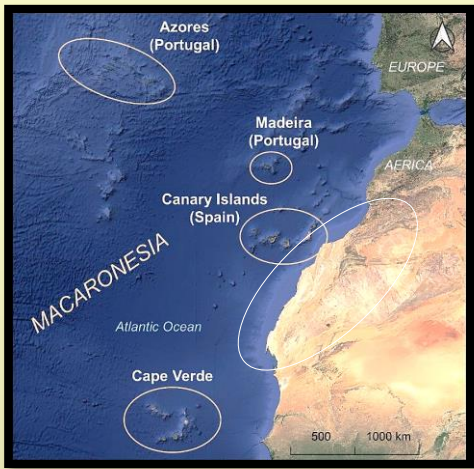


Image Source  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Macaronesia-area-which-includes-Cape-Verde-Canary-Islands-Spain-Madeira-Portugal\\_fig1\\_383046298](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Macaronesia-area-which-includes-Cape-Verde-Canary-Islands-Spain-Madeira-Portugal_fig1_383046298)

- At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, sugar cane was raised through the Mediterranean, the shores of the levant, Egyptian Nile delta, some centers of North Africa and Morocco, Southern Spain (Al-Andalus and Granada), Cyprus, Crete and Sicily.
- Portuguese were desperately looking for other lands to produce sugar, and it was the Madeira Island Model that played the role example for what happened next.
- Portugal secured its political territorial settlements by securing it through sugar plantations. The Madeira Islands (composed of Madeira, Porto Santo, Deserta and the Selvagens) were appropriated after the victory of Ceuta by King Joao I Avis of Portugal (1357-1433), who gifted them to his son Henry The Navigator (1394-1460).
- Portugal navigators brought sugar cane and planted it on newly discovered lands along the northwest African coasts: Canary Islands, Cape Verde and Azores. By 1472, sugar cane was planted as far south along the west coast of Africa and the Island of St. Thomas on the

- equatorial line. The Portuguese had access to Black-African slaves for the plantations in Africa, and they copied the sugar cane business model observed in Sicily and the Mediterranean.
- In relation to Spain, it is in Granada that still exists the “trapiche” mill most conserved of our history.
  - The diversification of sugar products during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, previous to the discovery of America, included numerous formats (conic refined, panela, sugar loaf, including aromas from roses, violets, lemons or nuts).
  - Madeira in less than 50 years replaced Venice as a sugar trade and refining center. In 1441, Antam Gonzalves was the first African slaves' trafficker for King Henry new sugar plantations of Macaronesia. Nuno Tristao imported 230 slaves for sugar plantations afterward.
  - The Spanish and Portuguese Activity around sugar raised as of the discovery of America by Columbus, who planted sugar cane in Hispaniola (Haiti-Dominican Republic today) and Brazil.



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

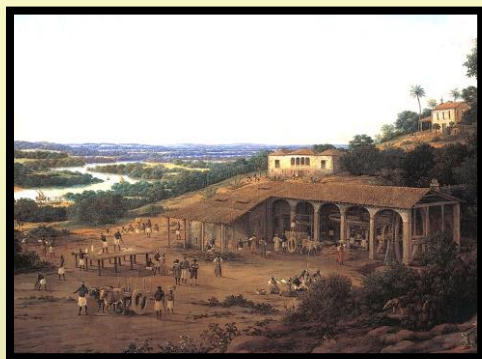


### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?



Sugarcane Mills in Brazil, by Frans Post

Image source: <https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/fine-art-prints/Frans-Post/1093015/Sugarcane-Mills-in-Brazil,-by-Frans-Post.html>

- When Columbus discovered the Caribbean Islands (called erroneously West Indies), all the nascent sugar cane extraction and processing was made with the Natives (the residents of America), but in short time, these died and almost disappeared from existence.
- For example, the racial dimension against the Tainos of Hispaniola triggered the sugar business model to utilize the local labor enslaved force. The Spanish simply replicated what they saw in the Portuguese plantations and Mediterranean Europe. The sugar cane industry used slaves in Europe, with no exception. Including the feudal lords and the Catholic Church lands who produced sugar. The business model was imported to America, with Columbus and it caused the extinction of 3 to 8 million tainos between 1492 to 1542.
- Bartolomé de las Casas, who initially was also a planter and encomendero to the Royal Spanish Crown, used his influence with Charles V, to stop the forced slavery using Native Indians after the

holocaust of the Tainos, diverging the attention to use Black-Africans instead.

- Las Casas also introduced the concept of “restauration” to the Spaniards who searched the absolution of sins: they were obliged to return freedom and the land to the Native-Prehispanic of their encomiendas. Las Casas tried to change the slave model, but he died in 1566. And he couldn’t change the slave labor of the Africans.
- The production of sugar expanded to all the Caribbean indies: Trinidad, Dominique, Guadalupe, Cuba, Martinique. By 1516, Charles V received 6 pains of sugar sent from the Hispaniola. Diego and Luis Columbus (sons of Cristobal) held the most beautiful plantations of sugar cane in Hispaniola.
- The Portuguese found Brazil and immediately, without hesitation, the king opened the doors for planters to start with the sugar plantation slavery model there.

The sugar cane arrives to the Caribbean  
To this day, it is agreed that sugar cane came to America with the Spaniards and Portuguese. Genoese and Venetians controlled the sugar production of the Canarian Islands, From Canarias, it was the same Columbus who brought sugar cane to Hispaniola.





# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar America. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

How did sugar arrive to become the star commodity of global trade?



Portugal port-Lisbon

Image source: <https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/fine-art-prints/Unknown-artist/996305/Maritime-trade-and-trade-with-the-Spanish-Indes.html>

- The Genoese, Sicilian and Portuguese were the specialists in sugar cane production and refinement by the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- They took the model of Madeira and replicated it so quickly, in no time at the Islands of The Azores, the Cape Verde and St. Thomas.
- From here, the sugar plantation model was introduced to Brazil.
- King Manuel I Aviz-Plantagenet implanted the sugar culture in Brazil by granting lots of land to the nobles who wished to reside there as planters. It was a requisite for the new Portuguese planters to bring instruction and equipment for large scale sugarcane production that was later imported through Lisbon and received in Antwerp (The Netherlands) for refinery.
- Brazilian plantations in Pernambuco were the largest and

first ultra productive sugar rties in the new world.

- Brazilian planters turned to Africa to find an inexhaustible supply of slaves, and by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century , Brazil was a rich and the most opulent colony that the world has ever known, with thousands of black-African slaves.
- The Dutch transferred the sugar business model of Pernambuco into a few islands of the Caribbean Islands, to learn the knowhow and enter as a competition with Portugal and Spain. But not in America, they produced it in Java, Indonesia.
- We will stop here. Our work for the year 2025 is finalized. See you again on January 9<sup>th</sup>, with the continuation of this episode.
- Happy holidays. Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2026.

The sugar cane as an authentication domain medium for Portugal:  
There were two reasons why Portugal expanded its navigation capabilities with the caravel: The caravel allowed them to cross the ocean to the Azores and down the Coast of Africa. Sugar cane represented the symbol of conquest, settlement and integration of new land for Portugal growth.



Sugar Cane in America

Discovery of America

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Tracing the geographical spread of sugar cane

Next year we will explore how did sugar European demand caused the following sugar production map of 1912...

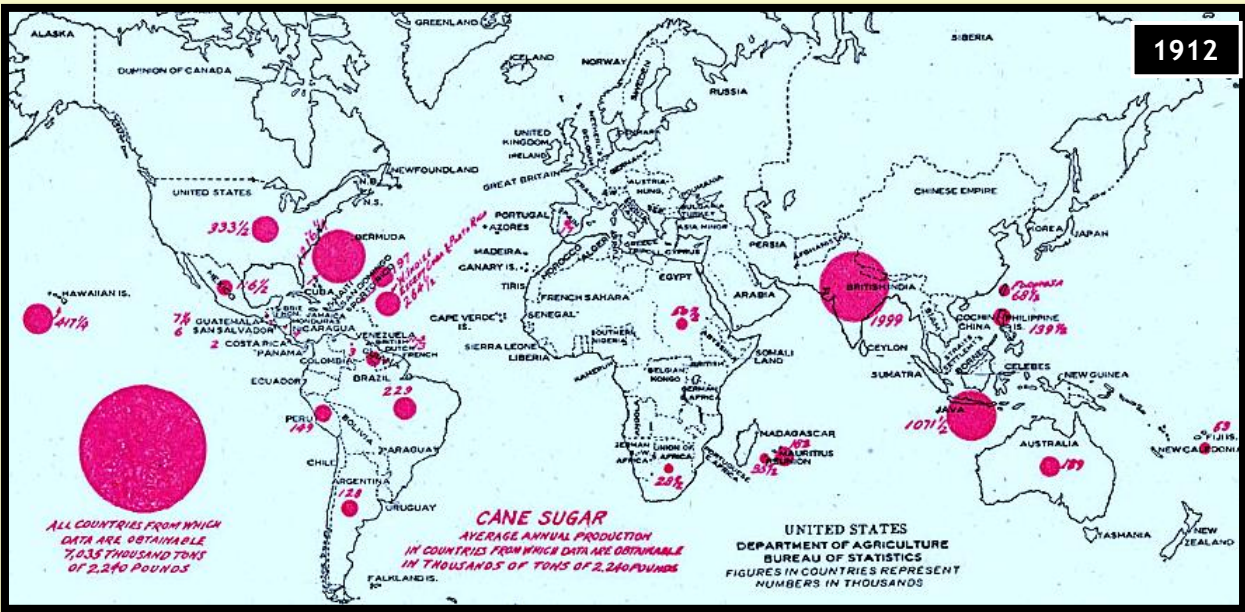


Image source World Distribution of Cane Sugar Production, 1912  
The American Library Atlas of the World (Chicago, Illinois: Geographical Publishing Co., 1912) 94 <https://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/6500/6594/6594.htm>

The production of sugar in Central America was irrelevant and minimal by 1912. Whatever they produced was used to fill the domestic needs of the inhabitants. The three most important suppliers of sugar were India, Cuba and Java-Indonesia.

Next year 2026. we will explain the fundamentals of the demand of sugar, and how did we arrive to this sugar production map of 1912. We will not cover the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Average Annual Production Cane Sugar 1912	
Country	Million Tonnes
British India	1.99
Cuba	1.22
Java	1.07
Hawaii	0.42
USA	0.33
West Indies (exc. Puerto Rico and Cuba)	0.26
Brazil	0.23
Philippines	0.199
Puerto Rico	0.197
Australia	0.189
Mauritius	0.182
Peru	0.149
Argentina	0.128
México	0.116
Guyana	0.114
Central America (incl. Belize)	0.025
All countries (with data available 1912)	7.035

#### What was the primitive value chain of Sugar by 1492



# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### History of Sugar as a Commodity

#### Definition of sugar as an element of value

Next year, we will define sugar from the point of view of elements of value. What made it a successful product as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

Elements of Value that shifted sugar from a superfluous luxury to a general commodity

Mid 16<sup>th</sup> century

Superfluity

End of 19<sup>th</sup> century

Necessity for daily well-being

Superior Utility

Sweetness

Condiment

Happiness

Trade

Intimately associated to Stimulant food

Pleasure

Medication

Liable to fermentation

Refined for preservation

Cheapness

Easy Bulk Transport

Drug

Gratification

Whole utility

Nourishing Aroma

With Tea-Coffee-Chocolate

Energy

Dependency

Substitute of Honey

Greater satisfaction at a lower cost

Delicious

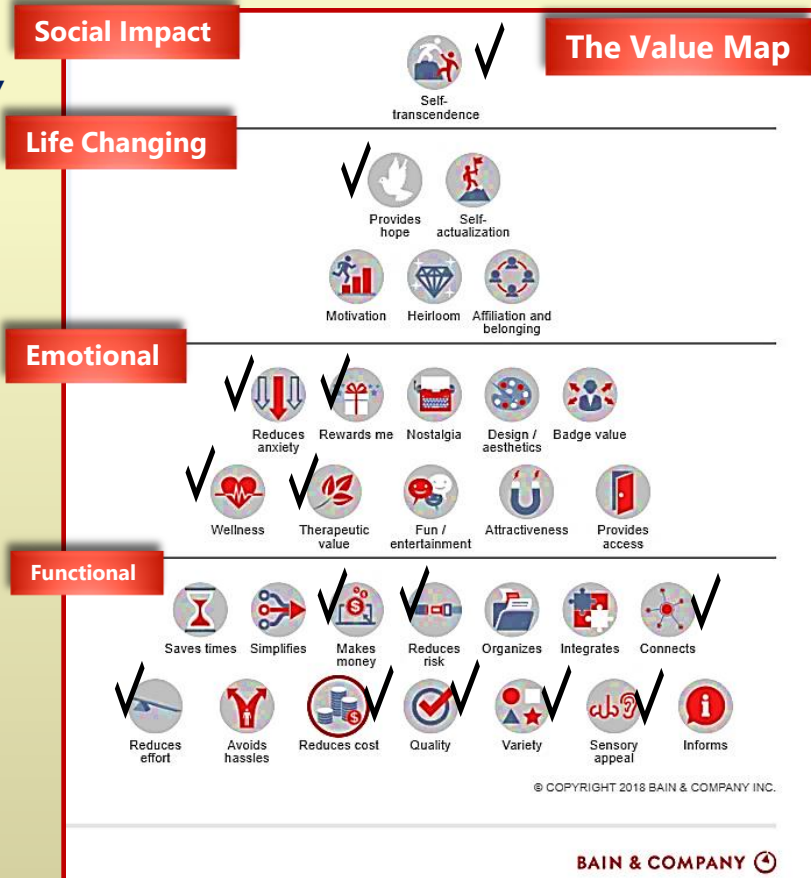
Escalante Strategy

Art Corporate Strategy

All rights reserved. Copyright 2016-2025



According to Ellis, sugar is an economic good with AN AMPLE GAMMA OF inherent qualities that respond to humans needs and wants that fit to gratify them and affect their human organism (1905). We will explore the value proposition of sugar next year 2026.





# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.



### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction

#### Bibliography 1/2

1. Tracy, James D., ed. The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350-1750. of Studies in Comparative Early Modern History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Chapter 3 by Niels Steensgard.
2. Ellis, E. D. An Introduction to the History of Sugar as a Commodity. The John Winston co. 1905.  
<https://archive.org/details/introductiontohi00ellirich>
3. Cañas Dinarte, C. Eran Mares los Cañales. Historia de la Azucar en El Salvador. Editorial Kalina para Asociación Azucarera de El Salvador, 2009.
4. Berthe, Jean-Pierre. "Sur l'Histoire Sucrière Américaine." Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales 14, no. 1 (1959): 135-41.
5. Geerligs, H. C. Prinsen. "GENERAL SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE CANE SUGAR INDUSTRY FROM THE BEGINNING TILL THE INTRODUCTION OF THE 'CONTINENTAL SYSTEM.'" Chapter. In The World's Cane Sugar Industry: Past and Present, 3-12. Cambridge Library Collection - Latin American Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
6. Gilard Jacques, Tulet Jean-Christian. Présentation. In: Caravelle, n° 85, 2005. Grandes plantations d'Amérique latine. pp. 7-16.  
[www.persee.fr/doc/carav\\_1147-6753\\_2005\\_num\\_85\\_1\\_2897](http://www.persee.fr/doc/carav_1147-6753_2005_num_85_1_2897)
7. Gernalzick, Nadja, and Joseph Imorde, eds. The Mediality of Sugar, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 24 Oct. 2022)  
<https://brill.com/display/book/9789004513686/BP000010.xml>
8. Farmer, B. H. The Geographical Journal 156, no. 1 (1990): 97-98. <https://doi.org/10.2307/635470>.
9. Ward, J. R. "The Profitability of Sugar Planting in the British West Indies, 1650-1834." The Economic History Review 31, no. 2 (1978): 197-213. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2594924?seq=1>
10. Roberts, J. Sugar in the Atlantic World <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0140.xml>
11. Roberts, Justin. "Race and the Origins of Plantation Slavery." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History. 3 Mar. 2016; Accessed 19 Dec. 2025. <https://oxfordre.com/americanhhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-268>.
12. Bieber, J. Plantation Societies in the era of European expansion. Routledge, 1997. Chapter 1. <https://www.routledge.com/Plantation-Societies-in-the-Era-of-European-Expansion/Bieber/p/book/9780860785064>
13. McHugh, James. 2020. "Śīdhu (Śīdhu): The Sugar Cane 'Wine' of Ancient and Early Medieval India". History of Science in South Asia 8 (May). Edmonton, Canada:36-56. <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/hssa/index.php/hssa/article/view/58>
14. Hampen, W. Sugar Cane History <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/communications/publications/agmag/archive/2002/fall/sugarcane-history>
15. Al Sharkey Sugar. Sugar History <https://sharkeyasugar.com/en/sugar-history>

*Our next stopover will be about the primitive sugar value chain, the rise of sugar crops at the West Indies between 1500 to 1850, and Sugar conflicts between the Sugar Empires*



Image Source:  
<https://www.eleconomista.net/actualidad/La-zafr-a-zucarera-redujo-su-produccion-en-Guatemala-un-7.2--durante-2021-20210729-0008.html>

# Central America: A Quest for the Progression of Economic Value. Season IV.

## From 1700-1900: The origin of Central America political-economy.

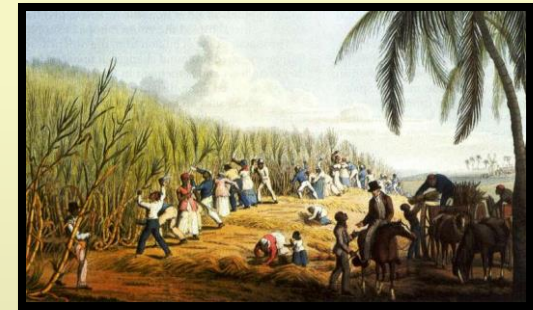


### Sugar-Sugar. Introduction.

#### Bibliography 2/2

16. The Portuguese Colonization of Madeira <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1756/the-portuguese-colonization-of-madeira/>
17. Petley, C. Plantations in the Atlantic World. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0165.xml>
18. Klein, Herbert S, and Vinson III Ben, 'Sugar and Slavery in the Caribbean in the 17th and 18th Centuries', African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oxford Academic. 2007 <https://academic.oup.com/book/47350/chapter-abstract/422409231?redirectedFrom=PDF>
19. Santos, F. et Al. Sugarcane Biorefinery, Technology and Perspectives. (2020). Chapter 1. Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/c2017-0-00884-4>
20. General Conditions of Plantations agriculture. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/agriculture-and-agribusiness/plantation-agriculture>
21. Tomich, Dale W. Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar, Second Edition: Martinique and the World-Economy, 1830-1848. State University of New York Press, 2016. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.18473014>
22. Hicks, Dan. "The Garden of the World: an Historical Archaeology of Eastern Caribbean Sugar Landscapes," 2007. [https://www.academia.edu/210584/The\\_Garden\\_of\\_the\\_World\\_an\\_historical\\_archaeology\\_of\\_Eastern\\_Caribbean\\_sugar\\_landscapes?nav\\_from=bd15726a-1183-498b-a0b4-4fd90b70b887](https://www.academia.edu/210584/The_Garden_of_the_World_an_historical_archaeology_of_Eastern_Caribbean_sugar_landscapes?nav_from=bd15726a-1183-498b-a0b4-4fd90b70b887)
23. Map of world sugar Production by the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Statistics 1912. <https://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/6500/6594/6594.htm>
24. Plantation Agriculture. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/agriculture-and-agribusiness/plantation-agriculture>
25. Bentley, J et Al. The Cambridge World History Volume VI. The Construction of a Global World (1400-1800 CE) Part 2. Patterns of Change. Chapter 11. Plantations Societies by Trevor Burnard. Cambridge U. Press 2015
26. Mintz, S. Plantations and the Rise of a World Food Economy: Some preliminary Ideas. Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 34, no. 1/2 (2011): 3-14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23595132?seq=1>
27. Fay, C. R. "Plantation Economy." The Economic Journal 46, no. 184 (1936): 620-44 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2224675>
28. Abbot, E. Le sucre. Une histoire Douce -Amere. <https://www.chasse-aux-livres.fr/prix/2762128692/histoire-douce-amere-du-sucre-elizabeth-abbott>
29. And there are plenty of books to come...

*Our next stopover will be about the primitive sugar value chain, the rise of sugar crops at the West Indies between 1500 to 1850, and Sugar conflicts between the Sugar Empires*







Sugar sugar in Central America 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries  
Photo: Galería Guatecaña.



*Thank you*

**The origin of Central America political-economy.**

**Period of study: From 1700 to 1900**

<https://eleonoraescalantestrategy.com/>

