



The Paradox of Democracy in Latin America: Ten Country Studies of Division and Resilience

Katherine Isbester

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Inviting in tone and organization but rigorous in its scholarship, *The Paradox of Democracy in Latin America* focuses on the problems, successes, and multiple forms of democracy in Latin America. The opening chapters provide readers with a theoretical and conceptual lens through which to examine the ten case studies, which focus on Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina.

What becomes clear throughout is that there is a paradox at the heart of Latin America's democracies. Despite decades of struggle to replace authoritarian dictatorships with electoral democracies, solid economic growth (leading up to the global credit crisis), and increased efforts by the state to extend the benefits of peace and prosperity to the poor, democracy—as a political system—is experiencing declining support, and support for authoritarianism is on the rise.

The Paradox of Democracy in Latin America demonstrates the deep divisions between rulers and ruled in Latin America that undermine democratic processes, institutions, and norms.

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