



Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship, And Society In Latin America

Elizabeth Jelin, Eric Hershberg

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In this pathbreaking contribution to debates about human rights, democracy, and society, distinguished social scientists from Latin America and the United States move beyond questions of state terror, violence, and similar abuses to embrace broader concepts of human rights: citizenship, identity, civil society, racism, gender discrimination, and poverty. Following an introduction that sets forth the conceptual framework, the first section of the book analyzes the impact of past human rights violations on the consolidation of new democracies, highlighting unresolved issues of civil-military relations and the need to maximize accountability for past violations. Contributors then consider the international context for contemporary debates about human rights, focusing on the emergence of an international network of human rights organizations and on the strategic responses of Latin American militaries to respond to international pressures to respect human rights. A third section examines notions of citizenship and links them to debates about definitions of rights and about the relationship between democracy and capitalism. Finally, the book features case studies of rights-related concerns in light of enduring patterns of discrimination against a variety of groups, including indigenous peoples, women, and racial minorities. This section concludes with an essay on a new kind of state-sanctioned rights violation—the assault on the human rights of common criminals, which has followed in the wake of public outcry for a more vigorous response to growing crime rates in urban areas.

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