

The Politics Of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, And Underdevelopment

continued politicization and racialization surrounding voting rights policy and the VRA. Its message was simple: "Live by and die by the text" of the statute (p. 158). In this sense, Congress has abdicated its role as the "principal" controlling the content and direction of voting rights policy" (p. 110).

This reality is made clear in Chapter 3, "Misdirections," which meticulously details the 2006 reauthorization of the VRA. This extensive analysis spells out the basis of congressional politics, partisanship, and racial politics within the Johnson Framework. Moreover, it details how the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives was able to manage each step of the reauthorization process that enhanced the party's political future. Included in this analysis is the ways in which the Congressional Black Caucus was able to negotiate a deal with the House Judiciary Committee Chair James Sensenbrenner (R-WI). The analysis of the 2006 reauthorization clearly illustrates "the tension between the letter and the spirit of the law" (p. 113).

The authors' text is not without flaws. *When the Letter Betrays the Spirit* starts out on a strong note by exploring the logic of delegation and discretion and "the construction of the Voting Rights Act and the enforcement infrastructure responsible for implementing the law" (p. 6). Through a series of detailed examples, King-Meadows demonstrates how Congress's role in shaping voting rights policy has been undermined by other institutional actors, including local and federal officials, who are able to delay, defer, or ignore requests for action. However, the conclusion fails to detail how Congress can take a more proactive role. An argument is not convincingly made concerning how Congress can wrestle power away from the executive branch or local officials. King-Meadows argues that Congress can be both the problem and the solution regarding protection of the future of voting rights is poorly developed. The author's use of the Johnson Framework throughout the text is weakened further by the "increasingly hyper-partisan and hyper-polarized" nature of the contemporary Congress (p. xxvii). In light of the partisan and ideological challenges that are now a common feature of Congress, the concluding chapter falls flat when combined with the reality that the 2006 reauthorization renewed several provisions of the VRA, including Section 5, language assistance programs, and Election Day monitors, and these provisions are set to expire in 2031.

As such, the executive-centered approach to the implementation of the VRA will very likely continue as a multi-stage institutional process that imparts "federalism costs" on covered states, and Congress's role will probably continue to be marginalized to its oversight function. Chapter 7 underscores the challenges Congress faces due to the amount of bureaucratic power that is used "largely outside the purview of aggressive congressional scrutiny"

(p. 238) and how the language and subsequent enforcement and implementation of the VRA "privileged the prerogatives of the president" (p. 250).

The continued use of the Johnson Framework by the Obama administration underscores the power of the executive branch to achieve partisan, ideological, and institutional gains, regardless of who occupies the White House. The meta-narrative of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 concerns the discretion and delegation of decision-making authority that have undermined Congress's role in protecting and extending voting rights, and the partisan interests and racial politics that are constant companions to each decision made by various institutional actors. King-Meadows has provided a strong analysis of the ways in which the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, as well as the extensive federal bureaucracy in the form of the Department of Justice, determine how the letter of the law can be used to undermine the spirit of the law.

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— Craig Arceneaux, California Polytechnic State University

This book tackles several core questions in the literature on underdevelopment while highlighting contemporary history in Central America. Fabrice Lehoucq systematically examines the origins of civil wars, the causes of democratization, and the hardship that economic underdevelopment places on democratic consolidation. It is an ambitious undertaking for a book that runs to a little more than 160 pages of text. In the end, the work serves as a valuable platform for discussion on the political economy of underdevelopment. The answers provided are not as neatly packaged as the questions posed, but some of this is no doubt due to the complex nature of the inquiry itself. And the book does fall short on its substantive effort to take an overview of developments—or underdevelopments, as it were—in contemporary Central America.

As Lehoucq reminds us in the opening pages of *The Politics of Modern Central America*, it is stunning just how quickly the region disappeared from the headlines after the end of the Cold War. In the 1980s, the Reagan administration had all but marked Central America as a staging ground for the march of communism across the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, many of us recall Ronald Reagan's warning of just how quickly Nicaraguan troops could make their way to Brownsville, Texas—an alleged threat which, along with the defense of El Salvador, justified support for the *contras* in Nicaragua. U.S. support for the *contras* became unmistakably scandalous as ties to weapons sales

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Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment This book also uses comparisons among Central American cases - both between them and American cases to improve explanations of regime change and the outbreak of civil war. Book Review. MICHAEL E. ALLISON. The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment, Fabrice Lehoucq (New York . Fabrice Lehoucq, The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. This book also uses comparisons among Central American cases - both between them and other parts of the developing world The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment. Full-Text Paper (PDF): Fabrice Lehoucq, The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment. also uses comparisons among Central American cases-- and between them and Civil War, Democratization and Underdevelopment. The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment. Other editions. Enlarge cover. Want to Read saving. The Hardcover of the The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment by Fabrice Lehoucq at amazing-learning.com: The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment () by Fabrice. amazing-learning.com: The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment: Special order direct from the. Fabrice Lehoucq, The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment, Cambridge, University Press, , pp. The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment. This book analyzes the origins and consequences of civil war in. Berghahn Books, - The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment, by Fabrice Lehoucq. Cambridge and New. The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment by Fabrice Lehoucq.

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