

Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe

From Cambridge University Press



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Employing a framework that focuses on the actions and choices of elites in creating consolidated democracies, a distinguished group of scholars examines Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Without ignoring the roles of mass publics and institutions, the authors conclude that in independent states with long records of political instability and authoritarian rule, democratic consolidation requires the achievement of elite "consensual unity"--that is, agreement among all politically important elites on the worth of existing democratic institutions and respect for democratic rules-of-the-game, coupled with increased "structural integration" among those elites.



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Review

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"There is surprising consistency in the excellence of the volume's content, interpretation, and even in its writing style. Another virtue is the clear focus the editors have imparted to the work in their introductory and concluding chapters, and also apparently, in their introductions to the contributors...The volume really does center on the issue of the degree to which agreements among the elites are a major causal factor in democratic consolidation...An excellent volume, discussing important problems over a wide range of countries with intelligence and style." Edward Malefakis, Columbia University

"This is a very useful compendium for historians, as well as for political scientists." Martin C. Needler, American Political Science Review

"...a valuable contribution to the burgeoning literature on democratization by insightfully exploring the role that political elites play in the process of democratic consolidation." Journal of Democracy

From the Back Cover

Employing a framework that focuses on the actions and choices of elites in creating consolidated democracies, a distinguished group of scholars examine in this book the recent transitions to democracy and the prospects for democratic stability in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and Uruguay. The role of elites in creating, democratizing, and consolidating the longer-established democratic regimes in Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, and Venezuela is also assessed, and an analysis of the stable but not very democratic Mexican regime is presented.

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