

Why Constitutional Change Often Fails to Enhance Democracy in Latin America

Constitutional change is often seen as a way to improve democracy. New constitutions can enshrine new rights, create new institutions, and change the way that power is distributed. However, in Latin America, constitutional change has often failed to live up to these expectations. In fact, in some cases, it has even made democracy worse.



Fixing Democracy: Why Constitutional Change Often Fails to Enhance Democracy in Latin America

by Macartan Humphreys

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There are a number of reasons why constitutional change often fails to enhance democracy in Latin America. One reason is that new constitutions are often written by elites who are more interested in protecting their own power than in creating a more democratic system.

Another reason is that new constitutions are often adopted without a broad consensus. This can lead to conflict and instability, which can make it difficult to implement the new constitution.

Finally, new constitutions are often not implemented effectively. This can be due to a lack of resources, political will, or capacity. As a result, the new constitution may not have the desired impact on the country's democratic system.

Case Studies

There are a number of case studies that illustrate the challenges of constitutional change in Latin America. One example is Venezuela. In 1999, Venezuela adopted a new constitution that was designed to create a more democratic and egalitarian society. However, the new constitution has been used by the government to suppress dissent and consolidate power.

Another example is Bolivia. In 2009, Bolivia adopted a new constitution that was designed to give more power to indigenous peoples. However, the new constitution has been criticized for being too vague and for not providing clear guidance on how to implement its provisions.

Finally, Ecuador is an example of a country where constitutional change has been more successful. In 2008, Ecuador adopted a new constitution that was designed to create a more democratic and inclusive society. The new constitution has been praised for its progressive provisions on social and economic rights.

Constitutional change is a complex and challenging process. There is no guarantee that a new constitution will lead to a more democratic society. In

Latin America, constitutional change has often failed to live up to expectations. However, there are some cases where constitutional change has been successful. The key to success is to ensure that the new constitution is written by a broad consensus, that it is implemented effectively, and that it is supported by the people.

Supplemental Resources

- Constitutions, Constitutional Change and Democracy in Latin America
- Constitutional Change in Latin America: Challenges and Opportunities
- Constitutional Change in Latin America



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