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UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESS

*Power and Design in Latin American
Institutions*

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Understanding Institutional Weakness

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Abstract: This Element introduces the concept of institutional weakness, arguing that weakness or strength is a function of the extent to which an institution actually matters to social, economic, or political outcomes. It then presents a typology of three forms of institutional weakness: insignificance, in which rules are complied with but do not affect the way actors behave; noncompliance, in which state elites either choose not to enforce the rules or fail to gain societal cooperation with them; and instability, in which the rules are changed at an unusually high rate. The Element then examines the sources of institutional weakness.

Keywords: institutions, Latin America, enforcement, compliance, instability

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