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978-0-521-86247-9 - Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico

Beatriz Magaloni

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Voting for Autocracy

Most autocracies today hold elections. Yet the role of autocratic elections and the behavior of voters and parties in these regimes often appear puzzling. Through the use of simple formal theory, quantitative analysis, and historic narrative, this book develops a broadly comparative theory of the survival and demise of “electoral autocracies” and the strategies they use to resolve intra-party conflict, divide and deter elite opponents, and win political loyalty from the masses. The book illustrates the theory with an analysis of the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), one of the most resilient autocratic regimes of the twentieth century. An autocratic regime hid behind the façade of elections that were held with clockwork precision. Although their outcome was totally predictable, elections were not hollow rituals. The PRI gave millions of ordinary citizens a vested interest in the survival of the autocratic regime. Voters could not simply “throw the rascals out” of office because their choices were constrained by a series of strategic dilemmas that compelled them to support the autocrats. The book also explores the factors that led to the demise of the PRI and what led to the transformation of autocratic elections into democratic ones.

Beatriz Magaloni is an assistant professor of political science at Stanford University. She is also affiliated with the Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law and the Latin American Center. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Duke University and a law degree from ITAM. Her dissertation won the Gabriel Almond Award for best dissertation in comparative politics granted by the American Political Science Association. Articles she has written have appeared in the *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, *Política y Gobierno*, and edited volumes.

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HEGEMONIC PARTY
SURVIVAL AND ITS DEMISE
IN MEXICO

BEATRIZ MAGALONI

Stanford University



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Acknowledgments

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