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978-1-107-02652-0 - Making Constitutions: Presidents, Parties, and Institutional Choice in Latin America

Gabriel L. Negretto

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Making Constitutions

This book provides the first systematic explanation of the origins of constitutional designs from an analytical, historical, and comparative perspective. Based on a comprehensive analysis of constitutional change in Latin America from 1900 to 2008 and four detailed case studies, Gabriel L. Negretto shows that the main determinants of constitutional choice are the past performance of constitutions in providing effective and legitimate instruments of government and the strategic interests of the actors who have influence over institutional selection. The book explains how governance problems shape the general guidelines for reform, while strategic calculations and power resources affect the selection of specific alternatives of design. It also emphasizes the importance of the events that trigger reform and the designers' level of electoral uncertainty for understanding the relative impact of short-term partisan interests on constitution writing. Negretto's study challenges predominant theories of institutional choice and paves the way for the development of a new research agenda on institutional change.

Gabriel L. Negretto is an associate professor of political studies at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico City. He holds a BA in law from the University of Buenos Aires, and both an MA of international affairs with specialization in Latin American studies and a PhD in political science from Columbia University. Negretto has been visiting Fellow at the University of Notre Dame and visiting professor at Princeton University, the New School for Social Research, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, and Columbia University. He has published numerous articles in American, European, and Latin American academic journals such as the *Journal of Politics*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Law & Society Review*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Government and Opposition*, and *Desarrollo Económico*.

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GABRIEL L. NEGRETTO

Division of Political Studies

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FOR MY MOTHER AND IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER

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Acknowledgments

This book explores the origins and change of constitutional designs in Latin America. Its goal is quite ambitious if one considers that virtually all central political institutions in this region have been unstable since independence. The research that is the basis of this book has thus required a significant effort of data collection and historical analysis that took place over several years. During this period, I naturally became indebted to a large number of people who contributed to this project.

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