Opening Up By Cracking Down

How did democratic developing countries open their economies during the late twentieth century? Since labor unions opposed free trade, democratic governments often used labor repression to ease the process of trade liberalization. Some democracies brazenly jailed union leaders and used police brutality to break the strikes that unions launched against such reforms. Others weakened labor union opposition through subtler tactics, such as banning strikes and retaliating against striking workers. Either way, this book argues that democratic developing countries were more likely to open their economies if they violated labor rights. Opening Up By Cracking Down draws on fieldwork interviews and archival research on Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Turkey, and India, as well as quantitative analysis of data from over one hundred developing countries to places labor unions and labor repression at the heart of the debate over democracy and trade liberalization in developing countries.

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Labor Repression and Trade Liberalization in Democratic Developing Countries

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George Washington University
Dedicated to Naomi and Talia
&
In Memory of Marilyn Simonson
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