



The Success of the Left in Latin America: Untainted Parties, Market Reforms, and Voting Behavior (ND Kellogg Inst Int'l Studies)

Rosario Queirolo

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Why, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, have so many Latin American countries elected governments identifying themselves with the ideological Left? In *The Success of the Left in Latin America: Untainted Parties, Market Reforms, and Voting Behavior*, Rosario Queirolo argues that the “pink tide” that swept across Latin America beginning in the late 1990s—with the election of a growing number of leftist political candidates to public office—was caused by the intent of voters to punish political parties unable to improve the economic well-being of their electorates. She argues that Latin Americans vote based on performance, ousting those whom they perceive as responsible for economic downturns, and ushering into power those in the “untainted opposition,” which has been the Left in most Latin American countries.

Queirolo argues that the effects of neoliberal economic reforms did not produce more votes for political parties on the Left. Rather, the key variable is unemployment. Left-leaning parties in Latin America increase their electoral chances when unemployment is high. In addition to explaining recent electoral successes of leftist parties, *The Success of the Left in Latin America* also undermines a dominant scholarly view of Latin Americans as random and unpredictable voters by showing how the electorate at the polls holds politicians accountable.

"Rosario Queirolo's *The Success of the Left in Latin America: Untainted Parties, Market Reforms, and Voting Behavior* makes a valuable contribution to the study of Latin American politics and of comparative politics more generally. Queirolo makes a compelling argument that the general shift to the Left in Latin America was less a straightforward protest against neoliberal policies but more strongly a reaction to negative economic performance. Enriched with extensive survey data, her book is authoritative and persuasive." —**Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University**

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